

NEW TRAILS
FOR THE
CHRISTIAN TEACHER

ROBERT SENECA SMITH

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New Trails for the Christian Teacher

Twelve Studies for Class Use or Personal Reading

By

ROBERT SENECA SMITH

*Horace Bushnell Professor of Christian Nurture
Yale Divinity School*

**A Textbook in the Standard Leadership
Training Curriculum, Outlined and Ap-
proved by The International Council of
Religious Education**

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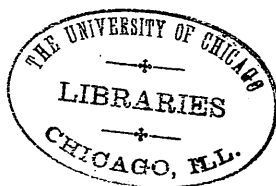
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**TO MY SON
KINGSLEY SMITH**

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

THE pages of this book have been suggested by the questions which, during recent years, have been put to the writer by his students in a course on "Methods of Religious Education," and by other students in a course on "Principles of Teaching." The members of the former course were students in the Yale Divinity School, who were also serving churches in the capacity of pastors or directors of religious education. The members of the second course were teachers in the city of New Haven and constituted a typical cross section of the teaching staff of the churches of that city. The majority of them were women who ranged from youth to middle age. They came from six different denominations, were active in all departments of their Church Schools, and represented a wide variety of training and culture.

The character of their questions was somewhat limited by the nature of the courses, i.e., they dealt with principles and procedures rather than with curriculum materials or content of instruction. But there was surprising unanimity of inquiry. The questioners were concerned with a considerable range of problems which may be grouped under the following:

1. What is the new emphasis in teaching?
2. What is meant by the teaching-learning process?

3. How can one discover and use in the teaching process the interests, capacities, and needs of his pupils?
4. How can one awaken the interest of his pupils and hold their attention?
5. How can one become a more consecrated and efficient teacher?
6. How can one relate his pupils in a vital fashion to God, Christ, the Bible, and the Church?
7. How can one develop a Christian personality and Christian conduct in his pupils?
8. What is the function of subject matter in an experience-centered curriculum?
9. What specific methods are available for the Church School teacher, and how can he use them?
10. How can the teacher be sure that he is getting results?

The writer's course on "Principles of Teaching," referred to above, was fashioned and conducted to help his students to deal with these common, vital problems. Both the major topics and the related subtopics were approached from the point of view of theory and then illustrated by practical examples from Church School practice.

These questions have been set down in this Foreword because the writer believes that they are the persistent problems that belong in this unit of the Standard Leadership Training Curriculum. It will be his purpose to deal with them here in much the same fashion that was employed in his leadership

training classes. He would like to assume that he is speaking personally to all those who may read or study this book; and for this reason will address the contents of the following chapters to his imaginary audience in the somewhat informal manner of his classroom teaching.

The writer has used with profit, and would therefore recommend to his readers, the following books which are pertinent to the major questions listed above:

Betts, George H., "Teaching Religion To-Day." The Abingdon Press, 1934.

Betts, George H., and Hawthorne, Marion O., "Method in Teaching Religion." The Abingdon Press, 1925.

Carrier, Blanche, "How Shall I Learn to Teach Religion?" Harper & Brothers, 1930.

Coe, George A., "What Is Christian Education?" Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929.

Powell, Wilfred E., "Growth of Christian Personality." The Bethany Press, 1929.

Vieth, Paul H., "Teaching for Christian Living." The Bethany Press, 1929.

The citation of these books, and others quoted in the text or referred to at the conclusion of the several chapters, does not signify that the writer or the editors are in complete agreement with all the positions set forth in such books.

The writer is in sympathy with the progressive emphasis in modern teaching and has endeavored to express this viewpoint. He recognizes, however, that the eternal values of Christian teaching are to be found now as always in the content of the Christian

gospel itself and in the spiritual experience of the teachers who expound it.

The writer desires to express his gratitude to all those who have contributed directly or indirectly to the writing of this book, and especially to his colleagues and to the hundreds of students with whom he has worked in the classroom, in leadership training institutes, and in summer conferences.

ROBERT SENECA SMITH.

New Haven, Connecticut,
July 15, 1934.

STUDY I

THE NEW EMPHASIS IN CHRISTIAN TEACHING

You are, perchance, already teaching in some department of your Church School. Or you may have enrolled in this teacher-training class in order that you may prepare yourself to take such a position. If you are getting ready to teach, but have not yet attempted to do so, you may be hoping to find in this course some ready-made methods which you can rather easily adopt and use. Let me remind you at the start that there is no easy road to successful teaching; that you must not only become familiar with its principles but you must put them into practice. In teaching, as in all other matters, one must learn to do by doing. One must learn to teach by teaching. It will be advisable for you, therefore, to accept a position in your Church School as soon as it may be offered to you, and to begin at once to put to use the suggestions which I shall make in this book.

If you have taught in a Church School, or are teaching to-day, you have doubtless often wondered why you do not find more satisfaction in your task. Presumably, you have asked yourself such questions as these: "Why do I find it so difficult to interest my pupils? Why is my teaching so ineffective? Why does it make so little apparent difference in the attitudes and conduct of my pupils?" Perhaps you have had hours of preparation or of teaching which were attended by a sense of exhilaration and success. What was the secret of that feeling? Doubtless you have had other hours of discouragement, when you felt like announcing to your superintendent or pastor that you were ready to resign. Why did you feel that your job was so futile? You may have wondered whether the trouble lay with the organization of your Church School, with its lack of morale and serious purpose, with the indifference of your pupils, or with the character of the lesson material which was provided. It is easy

to blame external circumstances for one's failure as a teacher. Or, if you were more critical of your own teaching performance, you may have traced the cause of your discouragement to some flaw in your plan of preparation or to some failure in your technique of presentation.

Probably you have read some books or articles on the principles of teaching, attended a summer conference on religious education, or taken other courses in a leadership training school. You may have been inspired by those whose writings you read or whose lectures you listened to. But when you returned to your own class, you found it difficult or impossible to translate your enthusiasm into your teaching procedure. It may be, also, that you were confused by such terms as "creative teaching," "the teaching-learning process," "teaching without textbooks," "the life situation approach." You thought that these were magic phrases—keys that would unlock the door into teaching success. But you did not quite understand what these terms meant or see how you could clothe them with flesh and blood when you met your class Sunday after Sunday.

If you are disturbed because the preceding description is a portrait of yourself, be assured that you belong to a great company of Christian teachers who are similarly troubled.

You have the right to expect from this book and from your leadership training course constructive help on all such points. Let me counsel you to think critically of what is said in these pages and to experiment with the suggestions which I offer. If they do not work in your teaching, be sure that you confer with your training-course leader about them.

In this study I shall deal with the following questions: What is the new emphasis in teaching? What is transmissive teaching? What is creative teaching? Should the teacher stress the personal growth of his pupils or their mastery of subject matter? Is creative teaching identical with any particular method?

What Is the New Emphasis in Teaching? Progressive leaders to-day, in the circles of both secular and religious education, are insisting upon a new emphasis in teaching. They are reminding us that learning is not just the memorizing of materials in

a textbook, and that the test of learning is not merely the ability to reproduce in oral or written form what has thus been memorized. Learning is more than the ability to repeat the ideas or the writings of another. It is even more than familiarizing one's self with such ideas and then describing them in one's own words.

This means that if you have persuaded your pupils to master the Twenty-third Psalm so that they can repeat it to you from "The Lord is my shepherd" to "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever," without hesitation or mistake, they have not necessarily "learned" the meaning of that psalm. They have memorized it, of course. In a sense it has become theirs. But they may have come into possession only of its words and phrases. They may not have felt the beauty of its form or the spiritual quality of its message. It may not have awakened within them any appreciation of the psalmist's experience or quickened their own understanding of the brooding love and care of God.

The evidence of real learning, we are reminded to-day, is to be found in the changes or modifications of behavior that occur in the life of the learner. In other words, has the teaching-learning process made a difference in the pupil? Has your attempt to "teach" the Twenty-third Psalm contributed something to the outlook, the faith, the sense of religious understanding and security of your pupils? Have they been affected by their contact with that psalm?

I have used the phrase "modifications of behavior" because it is a familiar phrase in educational circles. But behavior does not refer merely to physical ac-

tivity or to overt conduct. It is any kind of behavior—behavior of the mind and spirit as well as of the hands or lips. Therefore, modifications of behavior should include changes in one's knowledge, ideas, points of view, ideals, appreciations, and ambitions. It embraces the entire range of human activity that we include in the words character and conduct.

When the learner comes in touch with the experience of others, when his ideas and ideals are thereby enriched, when he exhibits an increased power to grapple with those problems which confront him and to meet those demands which society lays upon him, then we say that he has "learned." From the standpoint of the pupil, this process may be called learning; from the standpoint of the teacher it is called teaching.

What Is Transmissive Teaching? It has become common in recent years to use two antithetic terms—"creative" teaching and "transmissive" teaching—the former to indicate a process that is educationally good and the latter a process that is educationally bad. It may be helpful now to ask what is meant by "transmissive" teaching. The term is commonly applied to those teaching practices whereby we seek to hand on to the learner our accumulated stock of knowledge and experience. Our purpose is to pass on formally to the next generation what we know or believe to be true.

For hundreds of years it has been our common practice in religious education to teach transmissively. We have believed that our children and young people ought to be acquainted with the Bible and with

the lives of the men and women depicted there. We have said that the Scriptures are of such commanding worth that they ought to be known. We defended this position by affirming that the Bible is a body of sacred materials, the source book and the guide of our religion. We have insisted that not to know it is to be ignorant of matters of vast importance. I hold these affirmations to be true. But we have also believed that we could hand over to our children the experience of this ancient Hebrew civilization and culture, and that sheer familiarity with the contents of the Bible would insure the moral and religious growth of our pupils. In this fond hope we have been mistaken, as recent studies have pointed out.¹

To be sure, in more recent times we have selected from the total body of Hebrew and Christian literature what we consider its choicest material. We have chosen the chapters and passages of greatest literary beauty, the more significant historical events, and the more notable examples of Old and New Testament biography. The major portion of the Old Testament and much of the New Testament we have not used at all. Our standards of judgment have usually been moral and religious. Thus we have employed the stories of Amos and Hosea rather than of Samson and Elisha; we have decided that it is more important for our children to know certain of the psalms than to be acquainted with Leviticus and Chronicles, and

¹ Cf. Hartshorne, Hugh, May, Mark A., and others, "Studies in the Nature of Character." 3 Vols. The Macmillan Company, 1928-1930. Hightower, Pleasant R., "Biblical Information in Relation to Character and Conduct." University of Iowa, 1930.

most essential that they should have a comprehension of the Gospels.

But when, as a teacher, I feel sure that I have a body of material which is inherently valuable, I am likely to be more concerned that you should have it than I am with what you yourself need or think important. I am likely to think that it is my duty to take this material and to pass it on to you, or to superimpose upon you my own ideas. It is as if the truth in religion, or in any field for that matter, could be wrapped up in packages and delivered at your door. Of course, if that were strictly true, almost anyone could deliver the package. An untrained teacher might make a good delivery boy. Probably it is not unfair to say that all of us have done teaching of this type. We have taken a chapter from the Bible, or a lesson in a Quarterly, and have tried to impress its facts upon the minds of our pupils.

The most extravagant examples of transmissive teaching in Christian education have been the memorizing of the catechism and of Scripture. The catechism consists of a series of questions and answers of Biblical or doctrinal import. The answers were memorized by the pupil and repeated without thought or understanding of their meaning. Similarly passages of the Bible or unrelated verses were committed to memory and recited without explanation.² The Protestant sermon is also a type of transmissive teaching. The preacher commonly selects a

² Cf. Lankard, Frank G., "A History of the American Sunday School Curriculum," pp. 68-136. The Abingdon Press, 1927.

text or theme which he considers essential to the welfare of his congregation and develops the same with as much skill and persuasiveness as he can command. His purpose is to induce his hearers to accept his message and to make it theirs. The college lecturer likewise chooses what he considers most essential to the clarifying of his subject. He "gives his ideas" to his class who "take them down" in their notebooks. This whole process has been satirized in the following definition: "Transmissive education is that process by which the contents of the lecturer's notebook is transferred to the student's notebook, through the medium of the fountain pen, without passing through the brain of either."

It is easy to caricature this method and to deal flippantly with it, but it has much to commend it, as I shall later on point out. However, it has been employed too exclusively in our religious teaching and it still prevails in the vast majority of our Church Schools. Probably you, as a teacher, have consciously or unconsciously used it. If you doubt the truth of this statement, will you permit me to ask you a few questions? Is it your habit to study your Sunday School lesson with its Scripture, notes, and questions, and then in class to help your pupils to see it as you see it, to retain it in their memories as you have retained it in yours, and to be able to answer correctly the factual questions which you propound? Have you ever, toward the close of the lesson period, tried to "squeeze an application" from the lesson and, when your pupils seemed indifferent, endeavored to secure their assent to some "application" which had appealed to you? In the midst of

such an experience, has some boy ever startled you with a question like this: "We are electing a football captain in high school this week. What sort of fellow would make a good captain?" And have you replied, "That is a good question, but to-day we must stick to our lesson"? Have you ever felt, when the lesson period was over, that probably the hour with your class would have very little influence upon the lives of your pupils? Have you been discouraged because your teaching seemed dull, your illustrations inept, your pupils listless, and the whole business remote from their immediate interests? If you must say, "Yes," to these questions, you are probably a transmissive teacher.

What Is Creative Teaching?³ Unlike transmissive teaching, creative teaching is not concerned to pass on to the next generation a fixed store of knowledge, customs, and beliefs. It is interested in persons, in the growth of their ideas and ideals, in the enrichment of their character and the enlargement of their outlook on life. It starts with persons. It deals with persons. Its end is the growth and culture of persons.

You see, if you are teaching creatively, you are not anxious to get a particular lesson into the heads of your children. Your major purpose is to assist them to grow in their ability to think and choose and act. You are concerned with their problems, not with the problems of some ancient civilization. You know

³ **Note.** "Creative" and "progressive" are terms now widely used to denote the new emphases in education. They are overworked and much-abused terms. But they are convenient symbols, provided we understand what they stand for. Please observe how they are defined in this chapter.

that your boys and girls are living in their own town or city, not in Jericho or Jerusalem. They need guidance in forming their own opinions and coming to their own convictions, not a set of ready-made ideas taken bodily from an ancient culture. To be able to think and behave in a Christian way amid the complex life of the twentieth century is of paramount importance to us all. It is your task, as a Christian teacher, to help your pupils in this regard.

It may aid you to understand the principle of creative teaching, and to catch its spirit, if, instead of trying further to define it, we examine a report of an actual class session. It is taken from a recent volume of case studies.⁴ The occasion was an informal period in the second grade of a private elementary school held under religious auspices. On this particular day, the air armada was giving a demonstration over one of the seacoast cities. The following conversation took place:

Charles: I'm going to see it. I'm going on the roof. They're practicing for a war.

Girl: At one o'clock it starts—all the airplanes are coming down.

Teacher: What did we say about war?

Harry: I guess the children get such a kick out of this that it's all right to see it.

James: It's not real war—but we like to see the fun of it.

Harry: A man went up in a plane. He came down

⁴ Cf. Hartshorne, Hugh, and Lotz, Elsa, "Case Studies of Present-Day Religious Teaching," pp. 246, 247. Yale University Press, 1932.

again. Then he went up again and came down fast and pretended to crash—and he did crash.

Teacher: Do you know why there is this armada?

Virginia: Because they are trying to fight so they can have another war.

Paul: They're practicing in case a war comes.

Teacher: Really? Another war? Do you want to see another war? What do you think about it?

James: It hurts people.

Sally: We've got too many people to get hurt. If one person is killed here, they think it is terrible. In the other war they had to take horses and a lot of horses got hurt. They think it's terrible if a man gets killed. In war lots of people get hurt and they don't care.

Sammy (vehemently): And trees get pulled down, too, in wars. Some people say the airplanes are going to shoot guns on the boardwalk.

Harry: No, my mother says they won't do that—they're just practicing. They can shoot into the ocean. O boy! I'd like to go in an airplane.

Arthur: They could go right to the other side of the ocean and fight people over there.

Paul: Yes, they can come over here, too. They blow smoke and then nobody can see them and they can shoot.

Boy: But a lot of people can get killed in a war, men especially. Sometimes they get crippled. I saw a man. He was crippled—had to ride in a chair all the time. If it's a real war it is not so much fun as a make-believe one.

Marion: To-day it's just a pretend war, to show off the fleet.

Teacher: Some people think the armada might make girls and boys think war is a nice thing. Some men who went to the war don't want to see their sons go to war. God loves all the nations. They are all his children, aren't they?

When you study this report, you observe the eager interest of the children in the armada. They want to watch it and talk about it. It is the subject uppermost in their minds. They do not care to think about anything else. If their teacher had attempted to lift their attention from the armada, and fix it upon even so thrilling a story as "Daniel in the Lions' Den," she could not have succeeded. Observe also that the children associate the armada with war. They express a variety of opinions and attitudes concerning war. Their discussion reveals bits of information which they have doubtless gathered from overhearing the conversation of their parents. The teacher stimulates their thinking by her questions and comments. They respond by contributing more facts and opinions. Undoubtedly they are influencing one another by this free interchange of ideas. Observe also that the glamour of the armada and of war is counterbalanced by the bloodshed and havoc wrought upon men and animals. The account, however, closes abruptly and shows that the teacher missed her opportunity to make the most of her pupils' lead. By further questioning and additional data concerning war, she might have greatly increased the range and accuracy of her pupils' knowledge and thought and directed their attention toward the necessity of international good will and peace. In short, this situation, if it had been more adequately handled by the

teacher at the end of the session, would be a good example of creative teaching.

Should the Teacher Stress the Personal Growth of His Pupils or Their Mastery of Subject Matter?

It has been held in some circles that creative teaching must confine itself to the immediate personal problems of the learner. But this is to miss its full significance. It seeks also to introduce the learner to the ideas and experiences of others. It endeavors to acquaint him with racial experiences and skills. It tries to make him familiar with the treasures of knowledge both past and present. But, as I have said, a creative teacher always remembers that the growth of the learner is of primary importance. The pupil must live his life in his own time; he must be surrounded by his own environment. The creative teacher will help his pupil to discover his needs and provoke him to ask the question, "What lack I yet?" He will then lead him to the treasures of knowledge and experience to find what light they can shed on his problems and what help they can give concerning the art of living in this complex and critical era.

The teacher and learner together must attempt to evaluate and criticize the experiences both of the past and of the present in the light of their probable usefulness for present and future needs. The necessity for knowledge will always be upon us, of course—knowledge of the past and factual knowledge at that. But it will be knowledge that can be put to work, knowledge that is vital and dynamic, knowledge that can be translated into critical thinking and new attitudes and habits of behavior. It

may help us further if we examine a specific instance from Jesus' teaching technique. The example has to do with his instruction concerning prayer. According to the statement in the Gospel of Luke, Luke 11:1-4, Jesus had been "praying in a certain place." The account is meager. But presumably, as his custom was, he had been spending the night on some hilltop in solitude. His disciples had long observed his habit. They had unquestionably discussed it among themselves and commented on its importance in the life of their Master. They had been struck by the fact that he had not prayed with them or enjoined them to pray. They were conscious, however, that he had a secret which they did not possess. They became more and more convinced that it was the source of his personal power. They lacked it. They coveted it. So they came to him saying, "Lord, teach us to pray." Whereupon he gave them the words of the so-called "Lord's Prayer."

Again, as in our earlier example, you will note that his teaching was not forced upon them. He had waited until their minds were ready, until they had what has been called a "felt need." His habit and experience of prayer, their own need of power and poise, their curiosity concerning his secret, their request and his reply to them, together constituted a piece of constructive learning on their part and of creative teaching on his. Observe also that he was more concerned with them and with their needs than he was that they should master a particular form of prayer. Of course, they remembered it always and passed it on to succeeding generations of the Christian Church, but they did so because they

had asked for it. If Jesus had attempted to superimpose a prayer upon them when they were not ready, or when they were busy catching fish or mending nets, they would perhaps have listened courteously but they would have straightway forgotten what he had said.

Must a creative teacher always wait therefore until his pupils discover their problems or ask for advice or help? We shall discuss this question fully in Study V, but we must not pass it by completely at this point. In general, it is true to say that one can do a better teaching job if his pupils are alert and keenly interested. They are likely to be so if the teacher plans his course or lesson so that it comes to grips with their natural and immediate concerns. Whatever in his teaching is remote from their thoughts is not likely to have much influence upon them. I would say, therefore, that the more closely you can build your religious teaching around the interests of your pupils, and the questions which they ask, the more likely you are to teach creatively.

What I am here urging upon the religious educator is continually being brought to the attention of the secular educator, as the reading of modern educational literature makes perfectly clear. For example, as I write these words, there lies upon my desk the newspaper report⁵ of an address given by Professor Herbert B. Bruner, of Teachers College, Columbia University, at its summer session in 1933. "Most courses given in the schools of the country," said Professor Bruner, "skim blissfully over the surface, while even the better courses are merely descriptive

⁵ Cf. The New York Times. August 10, 1933, p. 17.

and historical in character, containing little value as far as fundamental economic and social problems are concerned. No course of study tells with reality the story of the revolution in the modes of living of millions of people brought about by labor-saving machines. Nowhere do we find any adequate treatment of the problem of leisure time, which probably will assume a tremendous new importance. No fundamental changes will be made in the curriculum until we, in education, fully appreciate the gravity of the situation and take sufficient time from the study of our narrow specialized fields to gain a more fundamental understanding of these problems ourselves."

Is Creative Teaching Identical with Any Particular Method? Right here it must be said, though the point will be more fully developed in Study VII, that a creative teacher will frequently use textbook or printed material. It may often happen that the surest way to re-create the thought and life of your pupils is to help them to become familiar with the biography of a commanding person of the long ago. For example, if you can present the character of Abraham in an appealing manner, so that the eternally human aspect of his adventure and faith stands out like an alluring mountain peak against the sky, you may succeed in stirring the adventurous spirit of your pupils to make a similar climb. By the same token, the surest way to help your pupils to be Christians may prove to be a careful study of the earthly career of Jesus of Nazareth.

What makes the difference between creative and transmissive teaching is not just the form or substance. It is not even the method. Do not allow

yourself to become confused upon this point so that you will identify creative teaching with any particular method. To teach creatively one need not always use the story-telling method, the dramatic method, the discussion method, or even the project method. One may use any or all of these methods and still be teaching transmissively, as I shall try to indicate in Studies VIII and IX. Furthermore, one may employ the lecture method or the lesson Quarterly and be teaching creatively.

Everything depends upon your purpose and the spot where you lay your emphasis. If you teach the life of Jesus as set forth in any one of the Gospels, so that your pupils may repeat the facts to you, as any other collection of historical facts might be memorized and recited, you are a transmissive teacher. But if you so present the life of Jesus that you and your pupils together may come to know, appreciate, and love him—so that together you may discover what it might mean to you and to all mankind if we took Jesus seriously—then you are a creative teacher. In this latter process you might use almost any method or combination of methods, and you might teach with or without a textbook.

In the sense in which I have used the term creative teaching, both the sermon and the college lecture can be and often are excellent examples of it. The sermon might deal with some problem that is uppermost in the minds of the members of the congregation or with some event in the community or the world which everyone is discussing. The preacher could bring to bear upon such a theme a variety of methods and

material. He might make a most effective use of relevant material from the Old Testament and the New. The sermon might well be attended by profound and dynamic changes in the attitudes of the people. The college lecturer, likewise, often pursues the same course in dealing with the interests of his students. In that case, both the preacher and the lecturer are creative teachers.

Furthermore, the most thought-provoking and conduct-stimulating factors in teaching may come from what are often called "incidental learnings"—that is, those rather intangible by-products that accompany the major business of a lesson period and are due to the teacher's character or example or spirit, or to his own personal comments on the theme under consideration. I shall develop this point in Study III. In passing let me recall a certain course on the poetry of Tennyson and Browning given in Yale College for many student generations by Professor William Lyon Phelps. I was a student in that course years ago. Professor Phelps lectured to us and there was little discussion. But the values that have lasted are not merely a new insight into the poets studied but Professor Phelps's own illuminating comments upon his experiences with life. These comments and his spirit are what I mean by "incidental learnings." They belong to what we have been calling creative education.

Summary. In this study I have suggested that the Christian teacher ought to be primarily concerned with the character and conduct of his pupils; that his chief business is to promote their growth as persons; that he is not a mere purveyor of lifeless facts

and information; that the subject matter of his teaching must become dynamic and useful; that he must stimulate his pupils to do their own thinking and to make their own choices in the light of the enriched conception of life which he has helped them to acquire. These are some of the new trails in which the Christian teacher must walk.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL STUDY AND THOUGHT

1. Do I agree with what has been said in this study concerning the values of creative teaching and the limitations of transmissive teaching?

2. What experiences have I had, either as pupil or teacher, with creative or transmissive teaching?

3. Can I use creatively the lesson materials provided by my Church School?

4. Are my present methods of teaching producing changes in the character and conduct of my pupils?

5. After you have finished teaching next Sunday's lesson, write out a detailed report of your procedure. Include your aim and plan, your questions, your pupils' replies and attitudes, your points of emphasis and conclusion. Then ask yourself these questions: Am I a creative or a transmissive teacher? Am I satisfied with my procedure? What changes should I make in my emphases, my methods, my use of material? If you cannot diagnose your case, confer with your training-course leader about your report.

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STUDY II

HOW LEARNING TAKES PLACE

We must now refer to a statement about learning made in the previous study. I said that learning is not merely memorizing the ideas of another nor just the ability to repeat them. Learning implies the modification of behavior.

If you question this statement, let me ask you to recall the process by which you acquired a particular physical skill—for example, swimming. You say that you know how to swim or that during a certain summer in camp you “learned” to swim. What do you mean, and how did you thus learn? Was it by reading books about correct swimming strokes or diving? Was it by listening to a lecture on life-saving? This is probably what happened. You waded into the water. You were afraid of stepping into a hole. You splashed about. You tried to rest your body on the water, meantime moving your arms and legs. You sank, came up, gasping for air. The instructor, placing his hand under your chest to keep you afloat, made you move your arms and legs. You persisted, and then one day you “got the knack” of it. You could support yourself alone and move through the water. It was a wonderful sensation. Day after day you kept at it, improving your strokes. Articles on swimming, pictures of diving, talks on life-saving became absorbingly interesting and helpful. You tried out these printed suggestions. You were no longer afraid. Your attitude toward the water was changed from timidity to pleasure, your behavior in the water from helplessness to freedom. More than that, you yourself were a different person. You had found a new sense of self-mastery. You were a bigger and abler person. You had “learned” to swim.

Or, recall another activity of a less physical sort. Your class in the Church School decided to prepare and send a Thanksgiving basket to a family in the parish. You had never before had a part in such a project. You did not

know what to do or where to begin. But your teacher discussed the matter with your class. You found out what articles of food were essential to a Thanksgiving dinner. For the first time you had the experience of going to the market to buy a turkey, vegetables, jellies, and fruit. You did all these things with other members of your class. You had never before engaged in a coöperative enterprise. The basket was packed and you went with other members of your class to the home for which you had prepared it. Here you found poverty, unemployment, illness, and a lack of all those things which you had supposed existed in every home. You were surprised by the gratitude of the family. You will never forget how the mother looked at you and said, "If you had not come, we should have had no Thanksgiving dinner." You had a sensation of satisfaction. Now that you have grown up, you know that it was a spiritual kind of satisfaction. You resolved that you would seize every opportunity to be helpful to people less fortunate than yourself. Very definite changes had taken place in you. You had acquired a new skill. You had tasted the joy of working with others and for others. Your range of interests was enlarged. You saw the truth of such Scripture texts as, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." You yourself were a finer person. You had "learned" to be helpful.

As you examine these two simple instances, drawn from the experience of your childhood, and fill in the outlines of the pictures with their appropriate names and details, you will notice certain common elements in both of these learnings. You will observe that you learned by doing, that you learned in the midst of a living situation, and that your learning was attended by interest and satisfaction. Moreover, because of the experience you could now do something that you had not been able to do before and thereby you became a different person.

All learning, even in its most complex forms, occurs in much the same fashion. We are now ready to examine the problem of this study in more detail under the following questions: What is learning? What factors make learning possible? What are the laws of learning?

What Is Learning? Learning has often been defined as the acquiring of general culture. If a per-

son, in his conversation, public address, or writings, shows himself familiar with a wide field of culture—history, science, biography, and literature—we call him a “learned man.” Learning is also identified with the acquiring of technical or professional knowledge. If a man has a wide and accurate knowledge of law or medicine, we say that he is a learned lawyer or physician. By either definition, the learned person is one who possesses knowledge, and the process of learning is, therefore, the acquiring of such knowledge.

We must ask ourselves whether this is the type of learning which we wish to foster in our Church Schools. Are we concerned that our pupils should acquire a knowledge of religious material—of Biblical history and literature—so that they will have it “at their tongues’ end” as a physician must have his *materia medica*? There are, of course, learned men in the field of religion—scholars in the Hebrew and Greek tongues, in Biblical history, in exposition and theology. Learning for them implies the study and the intellectual mastery of such materials. Are we trying in our Church Schools to promote learning of this kind?

When one examines the curriculums in general use in our Church Schools until recent years he is obliged to answer, “Yes,” to the question. It would appear that our major purpose has been to make our boys and girls familiar with the nature and contents of the Bible and of religious thought. We have believed that, while they might never become scholars, they should have an intelligent understanding of this important body of material. If this is the aim of

any reader of these pages, I have no quarrel with him. It is a worthy aim.

But learning is also defined as the acquisition of skill. If a person is able to attack and solve a problem within his field we call him a learned person. A physician is summoned to a patient's bedside. He diagnoses his patient's malady and prescribes remedies. If, over a period of years, he demonstrates his efficiency in dealing with all manner of disease, we say that he is a skillful physician, or a truly learned physician, for he knows how to use his medical knowledge. As a matter of fact, we demand that our learned men in every calling should be able to utilize their learning. Otherwise we discount the value of their knowledge and call them theorists or pedants or even prigs.

In recent years we have come to apply this same test to religious learning. We desire to possess such religious truth and experience as will help us to face the issues of our daily existence. The question is not, "How much do we know?" but "Can we use what we know?" Our interests are becoming increasingly practical.

We are concerned with the character growth and personal development of our children and young people. You, as a teacher, want your pupils to be able to stand firm in the face of temptation, to meet their daily problems without fear or failure, to develop high standards of conduct which will become dependable habits, to bring to whatever life work they undertake a Christian spirit and approach. Is this your purpose and belief? Then for you and for all those who share this purpose, Christian learning

means, not merely acquiring knowledge about the Christian way of life, but also becoming competent to live the Christian life. It means that we want our pupils to use their knowledge in the practical matters of our workaday world. In other words, we are concerned with a type of learning which makes a difference in life. If some one accuses us of being utilitarian, we shall not greatly object.

Sir George Adam Smith once reminded his readers in an illuminating piece of exposition that there are two kinds of knowing—knowing so as to see the fact of the thing and knowing so as to feel the force of it. He was commenting on the prophets' use of the Hebrew word "to know." "We have," he wrote, "in the Hebrew a word for knowing, the utterance of which almost invariably starts a moral echo, whose very sound is haunted by sympathy and duty. It is not to know so as to see the fact of, but to know so as to feel the force of; knowledge not as acquisition and mastery but as impression and passion. It is knowledge that is followed by shame, or by love, or by reverence, or by a sense of duty."¹

We need not fear to use the word "knowing" (or learning) in the sense in which the prophets used it. Modern writers are not suggesting a dangerously new approach in education, but merely reëchoing what Hosea and Isaiah were pleading for twenty-six hundred years ago, when they say: "The only kind of knowledge worth having is the knowledge that can be used in solving the important problems of life. All other knowledge is excess baggage. It is surplus

¹ Smith, George A., "The Twelve Prophets," Vol. I, p. 322. 2 Vols. Harper & Brothers.

weight. The man who tries to absorb all the miscellaneous and indiscriminate interests which modern life thrusts upon him is sure to become intellectually and spiritually obese. He needs to get his knowledge down to fighting weight, which means knowledge usable in vital problem-solving. The rest is fat."²

Shall we then take Professor Wieman literally and make no place in our Christian teaching for the mastery of the historical, literary, geographical, and critical aspects of our Biblical material? Even if such information seems to have no immediate bearing upon our present-day problems of thought and conduct, should we treat it as excess baggage and leave it out of the curriculum? These questions are injected here for your consideration. They will be dealt with in Study VII.

What Factors Make Learning Possible? Thus far we have been defining Christian learning in terms of the gaining of knowledge concerning the Christian way of life, or in terms of the acquiring of skill and power and desire to live the Christian life. We have been thinking of ends rather than of means, of the thing to be acquired rather than the process of acquiring it.

We turn now to the act of learning itself, to ask how it takes place, or what it is that is happening when we learn. We must remember that learning does not take place by chance. Like all other experiences it is caused by factors that precede and accompany it. We shall distinguish two such factors.

² Wieman, Henry N., "Methods of Private Religious Living," p. 96. The Macmillan Company, 1929. Used by permission.

The first is our original nature. This is a common term for our native endowment. It is what we are before our environment has a chance to affect us. Sometimes the term has been used to describe what the individual is at birth. But this use is not strictly accurate. Original nature, as used by the psychologist, refers to that new life which is formed when the male cell and the female cell unite, nine months before birth. "The fertilized ovum, formed by the combination of two cells, one from each of the parents, though microscopic in size and a simple sphere in shape, somehow contains the determiners for all the native or inherited traits of the new individual. It is very mysterious, certainly."³

Here, of course, in this new life, are actual and potential qualities that are distinctly human. The two cells have united to produce, not a fish or bird or dog, but man with the innate powers of a human being. If this new life is normal, it will learn to behave like a human being; it will learn to speak, read, plan, and reason. It may learn to love, adore, and worship. It is neither good nor bad, but potentially good or bad. It may become beautiful or ugly, loving or vicious.

Instead of saying that original nature is the primary factor in learning, it might be more helpful to say that learning depends primarily upon the inherited instincts or urges of our original nature. The basis for them is to be found in the human nervous system, which develops from the union of those first two microscopic cells. It is not necessary here to

³ Woodworth, Robert S., "Psychology," p. 91. Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 1921.

describe this structure, though it would be helpful to the reader to refer at this point to a nontechnical treatment of these matters in such a book as Professor Powell's "The Growth of Christian Personality."⁴

The unlearned instinctive tendencies or native drives, as they are variously called, have been defined and listed somewhat differently by the psychologists. Some writers confine the list to such fundamental urges as the instinct to preserve one's self, the instinct to be with others, and the sex instinct (broadly interpreted). Others, like Gates and Woodworth,⁵ extend the list to include the following tendencies: fighting, seeking to be with others, desiring approval, self-assertiveness, sex, parental affection, seeking to escape, curiosity, submissiveness, and physical activity.⁶

We cannot here discuss the bearing of each of these tendencies on the teaching-learning process. But we may consider one of them, by way of illustration—the desire for the approval of others. Here is a native drive that you can count upon finding

⁴ Powell, Wilfred E., "The Growth of Christian Personality," Chapters II and III. The Bethany Press, 1929.

⁵ Gates, Arthur I., "Psychology for Students of Education," Chapter VII. The Macmillan Company, 1923.

Woodworth, Robert S., "Psychology," Chapter VIII. Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 1921.

⁶ **Note.** The tendency to be religious is too complex to be included in this list. What we used to refer to as "the religious instinct" is probably best explained as a combination of several of these primary instincts moving outward and upward in a Godward direction; e.g., the desire for approval, curiosity, the capacity for affection, submissiveness, and even self-assertiveness, when directed toward God and the universe, are the original urges of the religious life.

in every normal person. It reveals itself in the little child's desire for his mother's smile; in the boy's eagerness to stand in well with the fellows; in the youth's craving to be popular in his set or fraternity; in the adult's sustained ambition to merit the respect and praise of his family and his friends, his constituency, and his community. The person who says that he does not care what people think about him is either abnormal or setting up a defense against popular criticism of his ideas or his conduct. Normal persons do care for approval. In its higher ranges this tendency takes the form of a desire to measure up to the highest standards of human character and achievement, and to merit the approval and consequent blessing of God. The Christian whose religion is genuine cares most of all for the assurance that his life and faith are worthy of the approval of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This highest form of approval, which is felt to be within one's own heart and at the same time to be above and beyond all human customs and sanctions, is of the very essence of religion.

As a Church School teacher, you can and must make full use of this tendency. You can build upon it and use it to motivate your work. You will find out whose approval your pupil most covets, because of its effect upon the kind of life that he is trying to lead. His ideals may be low because his hero, whose approval he craves, is of the wrong sort. By suggestion and example you may change the nature of the approval that your pupil cares for, until you have so enriched his ideas and ideals that he wants above all else to merit the esteem of the finest persons

in his community and his church, of his own Christ-filled conscience and his God.

If space permitted, I should like to illustrate the bearing upon the teaching-learning process of other instincts in our native endowment—for example, the tendency to be with other persons (gregariousness), the tendency to assert one's self, the tendency to be submissive, the tendency to explore or investigate (curiosity), and the tendency to engage in sex behavior (mating). The reader is urged to consult Professor Powell's book⁷ for illuminating and usable comments on these matters.

The second factor that makes for learning is environment. This term refers to all those external realities by which our original natures are modified and enriched. For example, there are the realities of the natural world—cold and heat; famine and plenty; climate; the beauty of mountain and plain, of sky and sea; and all the forces that chemistry and physics reveal. Our growth is deeply affected by the conditions in the world of nature amid which we live. Drought and famine might impoverish our physical vigor; climate might affect our temperaments; defiance of the law of gravitation might cripple us for life; and the solemn beauty of nature may touch our hearts to awe and worship.

We are more profoundly affected, however, by the persons in our environment—our parents and families, our playmates and neighbors, our teachers and friends, our associates and competitors—and by the cultural, economic, political, and moral conditions of the society in which we were born and brought up.

⁷ Powell, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-63.

For example, you were, no doubt, born and reared in a Christian home and surrounded by those who sought to help you. You may have had the advantage of culture and a higher education. Probably your work has been carried on among congenial people. Your work in the Church School is highly appreciated. Obviously, you are a very different person from the one you might have been if your contacts with people had been of the opposite sort.

As Christian teachers, however, we are primarily concerned with the religious factors in our environment—with religious persons and institutions, with the living Christ and the eternal God. We may never have thought of these religious realities as part of our environment. But they are outside us and they have an objective existence of their own. They stimulate us profoundly, because by nature we are sensitive to their influence. However, like all spiritual realities, their existence and value must be made manifest, else we may miss their significance and power. God is the most commanding stimulus in man's environment, but man must consciously recognize him as such. To help our pupils thus to know him is our chief business as Christian teachers.

We are often told that we are the products of all that we have met; that we are what our environment has made possible. Of course this statement is not altogether true, for there are always present in our development the two factors that make learning possible—original nature and environment. Often an extraordinary original nature will triumph over every unfortunate aspect of its environment, and sometimes the most propitious environment will fail to

produce a good man. This is no place to argue the comparative claims of heredity and environment. One must remember, however, that while a teacher cannot unmake the original nature of his pupil, he can modify and enlarge the growing personality and the latent capacities to unfold, and that he will do this through the use of the factor which we have called environment.

This, then, is the way in which learning takes place. The individual, with his highly sensitive nervous system, finds himself from his infancy surrounded by an environment not of his own choosing. This environment—or, more exactly, some portion of it or some situation in it—serves as a stimulus to his nervous system. He reacts to it, as we say. That is, his nervous system is capable both of receiving an impulse and of translating it into action. When he has reacted to a stimulus in a particular way he is likely to respond again to that same stimulus and in the same way. We say then that he has formed or is forming a habit of responding or of acting. What we really mean is that a connection has been established between his sensitivity to the stimulus and his response to it.

Let me illustrate this principle. Suppose that the stimulus is relatively simple. Your pupil is quite young—a member of the Beginners Department. He is devoted to you and wants you to like him. (desire for approval). He does a bit of handwork, takes part in a game, or retells a story in such fashion that you commend him for it. He has a sense of pleasure or satisfaction. He will try to win your approval as often as he can by repeating the action

which you praised. Observe the two factors which are at work here—the child's own nature, with its tendency to seek approval, and yourself, the Beginners group, the work and atmosphere of the department, all constituting his environment. Given that nature with its tendency to respond and the environment which you have provided as a stimulus, learning is taking place and habits of the particular character indicated are being formed.

Now, note the bearing of this principle upon your teaching process. You, as the teacher, provide the environment. To be sure, it is not the total environment of your pupil, for he is living seven days a week in his home, surrounded by his family and his playmates, amid the external stimuli of the radio, the "funnies," the "movies," et cetera. You cannot control all these influences, and they are constantly affecting him. But you can control the environment of the Church School period. Indeed, you are the chief factor in it. It is your main business so to fashion and direct that period that it may effectively evoke the most moral and spiritual responses of which your pupils are capable.

This, in brief, is the way learning takes place. There is no magic or trick about it. Given a normal child, with normal tendencies and normal sensitivity to stimuli, and given an environment that is meaningful to him, he will react or respond to it and in so doing his original nature will be modified. In this way we produce changes in behavior.

What Are the Laws of Learning? The process of learning just described has been made the subject of careful observation and experimentation, both with

animals and with human beings. Certain ways of behaving have been noted and have been named "the laws of learning." Of course, they are not pieces of external legislation framed by a body of educational experts. They are simply ways of behavior. We may speak of them as laws in the same sense that we speak of the laws of friendship. That is, they may be counted upon in the learning process. They are three in number:

1. *The Law of Readiness.* This is a convenient term for the fact that whenever a person is ready to act in a particular way, then to act is pleasant and to be prevented from acting is unpleasant. Conversely, whenever a person is not ready to act, it is unpleasant for him to be compelled to do so. Even before the experimental psychologist had called our attention to this law, we were aware of the fact that there are certain situations to which we are ready to respond; for example, the presence of food when we are hungry, an inviting bed when we are tired, or a warm room when we are cold. These same stimuli, however, may be unpleasant—food when we are satiated, a bed when we have planned to go to a party, or a warm room in midsummer. Some experiences, such as a sick headache, are always unpleasant; some, like the completion of a disagreeable task, are always pleasant. In the same manner there are suitable times for widely diverse experiences. What makes them appropriate or agreeable is our mood or the mood of the group. The Preacher, in the book of Ecclesiastes, has put this very well. There is a time, he said, "to weep, and a time to laugh; . . . a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

... a time to keep silence, and a time to speak." Eccl. 3:4-7.

The words "pleasant" and "unpleasant" as used in this law may cover a wide range of mental states, from a very mild uneasiness to the most severe type of irritation. As I write these words, I observe that my mind is eager or "ready" to set down the results of my study and experience. I am finding genuine pleasure or satisfaction in this piece of work. If a friend should call me on the telephone and suggest a game of golf, I should be only mildly disturbed because I like my friend and I enjoy golf. But if he insisted that I drop my work at once and play with him (please note that my mind is "ready" to write!) I should be annoyed. Conversely, if my publishers tried to force me to write this study when I did not feel in the mood for it, I should be irritated and the phone call from my friend and the game of golf would be a welcome relief.

Now this is not a law for you to memorize and file away. It is a law that you will want to practice. When your pupils are ready to act, give them the chance to act, and then guide and enrich their activity. The problems of motivation and of holding attention that have so often disturbed you are tied up with the law of readiness. If something has happened in the community and everyone is talking about it, your class is probably "ready" to discuss it with you. To do so is pleasant; not to do so is annoying. You had better let the pupils talk, at least for a time, directing the conversation into deeper channels. You recall how the teacher allowed

her children to discuss the armada in the incident cited in Study I. She was making use of this law.

You should observe also the converse of this law. If your pupils are not "ready" to respond to your lesson on, let us say, the work of Joseph as food commissioner in Egypt (Gen., ch. 41), then to force it upon them will be annoying and will probably be educationally and spiritually futile. Shall you, then, omit Joseph and the story of his constructive service to a foreign government in time of famine? Not at all. But (note the law!) you must prepare your pupils' minds for it so that they will be ready. This you might do by reference to famines in India or China or to our failure in this country adequately to distribute foodstuffs to the hungry. I recall teaching the incident to a class of college sophomores at the time when Herbert Hoover was the food commissioner in Belgium. I called Joseph "the Herbert Hoover of Egypt," and Joseph suddenly became alive. Often an illustration from contemporary news will help to make our pupils "ready."

2. *The Law of Effect.* It is obvious, when we reflect upon our own experience, that we tend to repeat those activities which are satisfying and to discontinue those which are disagreeable. This experience has been set forth in a second law of learning—the law of effect. Stated concisely it is this: When our response to a stimulus or situation is pleasant, we tend to make a similar response again and again. The converse is likewise true. This principle is one which from infancy to old age we never cease to practice. From the infant's desire to handle a smooth, shiny rattle to the old man's delight in sit-

ting in a comfortable chair by the fire, we repeat over and over again what we find pleasure in doing. This is why habits of behavior are formed.

Again, you will want to consider the bearing of this law upon your teaching. If attendance at the Church School is pleasant for your pupil, if participation in your class work, or in some group or school project under your direction, is satisfying, then you may feel sure that your teaching is having some positive influence upon his attitudes and conduct. If, on the contrary, your pupil tolerates your leadership, is restless under your teaching, finds his Church School experience unpleasant, you may be sure that as soon as his parents' discipline relaxes, or their disapproval of his absence from Church School diminishes, or when popular opinion and custom allow him to "graduate" gracefully from Church School—which usually occurs during middle adolescence—he will sever his actual connection.

Of course, various single factors in the total Church School situation may be so agreeable that they will outweigh the unpleasantness of the total situation. Your pupil's admiration and liking for you, his desire to be with some friend in the class, his eagerness for his parents' approval, may afford him such satisfaction that he continues to come even when the work itself no longer appeals to him. These factors, however, are transient. He may leave your class for another teacher whom he does not like; his friend may move out of town; or his parents may become less urgent about his attendance. Not much is left that gives him satisfaction. It is essential, therefore, that he should love his work for its own sake and

his church for what he can contribute to it. The more permanent the factors are which give him satisfaction, the more surely will habits of loyalty and coöperation be built up and endure.

The really important aspect of this law is that you may develop in your pupils a taste for finer satisfactions. The boy who has found it annoying to run errands for his mother may learn to find great satisfaction in helping her because of his love for her and his desire to help her. The girl who dislikes her high school work may learn to enjoy it because she sees that it has a bearing on her college course or on her future career as a useful citizen. Our taste in art, music, literature, and religion may be completely changed. We may learn to make a profitable and helpful use of our leisure time. Our interest in social service and in personal religion may grow from unobservably small beginnings into the most powerful drives in our later years. The wise teacher will always be trying to lift the level of his pupils' tastes—not forcing them in premature fashion, but enriching them gradually. In so doing he will not be working contrary to the law of effect, but in harmony with it.

3. *The Law of Use and Disuse.* This principle is an extension of the law of effect. It means, in simple definition, that when we make use of the tendency to respond, we strengthen that tendency; when we do not use it, we weaken it.

In the physical world examples are common. If I play golf every pleasant day during the summer, the muscles of my arms, shoulders, back, and legs will respond to the demands I make upon them and my

game will improve. If, however, I allow my clubs to repose in their bag and never go near a golf course during the summer, my muscles will become flabby and uncertain and my game, whether it be good or bad, will deteriorate.

You have surely felt the force of this law. If you always respond to an unreasonable criticism of your teaching by becoming angry or sad, your repeated exercise of that type of response will tend to make it easier and surer. But if, for any reason, you begin to respond to the same criticism with eagerness and joy—i.e., if you stop being angry and sad—then the latter responses through disuse will become less powerful and certain. Similarly, if I meet every experience of life with honesty, frankness, and sincerity, I strengthen those particular tendencies of my nature. I tend to become habitually an honest, frank, and sincere person. In the spiritual world, likewise, if I practice the presence of God in prayer, if I meet each day's tasks and problems in the spirit of prayer, the tendency to seek God's help and guidance is strengthened and I become habitually a prayerful person. Every "connection" between a situation and my response to it may become strong and dependable through use or weak and unreliable through disuse. The more frequently this connection is exercised, the stronger it becomes. This aspect of the law is sometimes referred to as the principle of frequency.

In this law we find our justification for saying that we learn by doing. The habitual (never-omitted) use of a tendency makes for stability and efficiency in that particular. The principle always

works, both with responses that are good and responses that are bad. In this way both good habits and bad are either strengthened or sloughed off.

Betts and Hawthorne have not stated the matter too strongly when they write: "If the child is to learn religious truths and develop religious concepts so that he will with certainty and skill make them a part of his thinking and a factor in his choosing, he must have these truths and concepts brought into use frequently enough so that the impression and skills become well grounded. One-day-a-week religious instruction will never produce efficient Christians."⁸

Summary. In this study I have discussed learning as the acquiring of knowledge versus learning as the acquiring of competence, and I have urged the necessity of making our learning productive of results in Christian thinking and life. I have said that the process of learning is due to two major factors: our original nature or native endowment, with which each of us begins his individual existence; and our environment of nature, persons, culture, and God, by which we are profoundly stimulated and enriched. I have further pointed out that learning takes place according to certain observed laws, the habitual use of which is imperative for the Christian teacher.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL STUDY AND THOUGHT

1. Sketch any personal "learning" of your own which is comparable to the examples cited in the preface to this study.

⁸ Betts, George H., and Hawthorne, Marion O., "Method in Teaching Religion," p. 116. Copyright, 1925, by The Abingdon Press, and used by permission.

2. How have you been in the habit of defining Christian learning? How does your definition coincide with that set forth in this study?

3. If you have access to Professor Powell's book, think through the implication of the tendency to be submissive, or to feel affection, for the learning process in Christian education.

4. By what environing conditions are your pupils surrounded? What special religious environment are you seeking to provide for them?

5. Make sure that you understand the laws of learning. How can you obey and make use of them in your teaching?

6. Write out a detailed account of the Church School environment in which you are doing your teaching. Examine your account to discover what factors are harmful to the full Christian development of your pupils; also what factors are conducive to their growth. What can be put into that environment which will make it more Christian? Be specific in your answers.

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STUDY III

HOW LEARNING TAKES PLACE (*Continued*)

As you read the preceding study, you doubtless found yourself asking many questions and raising certain objections. Perhaps you felt that our learning, as I described it, is at the mercy of our inborn instincts and of those situations which provoke us to respond. Is it all so simple as saying, "I have the instinct of hunger and when food is presented I eat"? You may have asked: "But can I not choose to eat or refuse to eat? Can I not decide how I shall behave? Do I not discern far-off goals toward which I can will to press?"

Or you may have said, "Can I not fashion my teaching so directly that my pupils will achieve one result rather than another?" Perchance you recall a teacher who presented the coming of the Pilgrims in such manner that your memory retained the facts of the story; another teacher who was so enthusiastic about the Pilgrims that you appreciated their courage and admired their idealism; and still another teacher who, because of his character, made you want to behave in the present age as the Pilgrims behaved long ago. So you reflected that by different emphases one lesson rather than another is directly taught and learned.

Or you may have questioned to what degree your teaching in a Church School hour really affected your pupils' lives during the following week. "What difference did it make in their conduct?" you said somewhat wearily. "Did that lesson on Paul's defense before Agrippa (Acts, ch. 26) make them more sincere? Was it taught only to be cast aside as an outmoded garment?"

Or you remembered from your experience as a pupil that you "picked up" many things that your teacher never intended to teach and that were not in the curriculum. You recall a lesson on prayer that left you feeling irreverent; a lesson on coöperation that made you "cold" to the project

that was suggested; an unfortunate disturbance in your class when your teacher lost his patience and made you question whether religion has anything to do with patience or fair play.

Or perhaps the study led you to inquire how you could establish dependable habits of right conduct in your pupils, so that they would not be at the mercy of those chance occasions and temptations which seemed to take them off their guard. "Do the laws of learning have anything to do with habit formation?" you asked yourself.

Or you were troubled because the study seemed to assume that your pupils were all alike; that because they were Juniors, for example, they would all behave according to the Junior pattern and look like the pictures of Juniors in the books you have read. But you know that your John is different from your James and that your William is not like either. Ought not something to be said about such differences?

Finally, you may have been troubled because I seemed to be treating learning in the Church School as if it were identical with learning in the public school. "But is there no difference," you ask—"nothing that makes Christian learning distinctive?"

The problems raised in these paragraphs have suggested the topics of this study: Is there an element of purpose in learning? What do we mean by direct learning? What is indirect, or incidental, learning? Is there transfer of learning? Are learning and habit formation identical? What shall we do with individual differences? What is distinctive in Christian learning?

Is There an Element of Purpose in Learning?

The treatment of the learning process in the preceding study may have seemed to make our learning mechanical. It may have made us appear like puppets pulled by the strings of our original nature or of our environment. But although I was discussing laws and processes, they do not tell the entire story.

To be sure, according to the extreme behaviorists, we are born with certain instinctive tendencies. Our

sense organs, for example—our seeing and hearing and feeling—are excited by ether waves or sound waves which are called stimuli. “Everything that happens in the body as a result of this excitation is called response.”¹ This theory when applied to all our inborn urges does make learning a thorough-going mechanistic process. But the theory is too simple to account for all the phenomena of our human experience.

For example, your pupil goes to public school and at recess joins his playmates in a game of baseball. He hasn’t been sitting around with his play patterns of behavior waiting to be stimulated to activity by a ball, a bat, and a playground. Long before recess, while he was supposed to be doing his arithmetic, he was planning the game and playing it in his imagination. Nor is his attitude toward his mother stimulated solely by what she requests him to do. Often he himself purposes to help her or to surprise her with a gift. As Professor Bode says, “If we go to the railroad station to meet a friend, we pick him out of the crowd. . . . If a person is hungry, his senses are on the alert for food. . . . The craving for excitement in small boys translates all sorts of ordinary objects into opportunities for creating a disturbance.”² We are not passive but active agents.

As we grow older our behavior tends to become increasingly purposeful. Out of a host of books and magazines we choose what we shall read; out of a

¹ Bode, Boyd H., “Conflicting Psychologies of Learning,” pp. 234, 236. D. C. Heath & Company, 1929. Reprinted by special permission.

² Bode, *op. cit.*, p. 237.

multitude of persons we select our friends; out of a variety of vocations we decide upon the one we shall pursue; out of many conflicting ideals we are loyal to one ideal. We do long-range planning. We refuse to respond to all sorts of invitations which might deter us from our goal. Many of them are attractive and good in themselves. To accept them would yield us transient satisfaction. But in their stead we often choose hard and disagreeable tasks because they are stages on the way to our goal. The stimulus to much of our action is not outside ourselves but within us. Instead of affirming that we are at the mercy of outside stimuli, it would be fairer to the facts to say that the external stimulus gives us the opportunity of making the response which we ourselves are "ready" to make.

How, then, can we account for this power which enables us to transcend the push and pull of any particular external situation? Somehow we must try to explain the fact that man is able to "select out of a total complex situation the one essential element to which he chooses to respond."³ This ability or quality has been called insight. But what do we mean by insight?

A school of psychology⁴ offers the explanation that the environment or situation changes as we look at it. For example, those who enjoy jig-saw puzzles know that the various pieces lying on the table

³ Bode, *op. cit.*, p. 237.

⁴ **Note.** This school of psychology is known as the *Gestalt* or the Gestalt School. Its point of view is indicated by the word "configuration," or pattern, which is a cumbersome translation of the word *Gestalt*. Cf. Koffka, Kurt, "Growth of the Mind." Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1924.

assume a new relationship when the key piece or the central picture is discovered. This is not because the table or the puzzle pieces have changed. It is because we have suddenly become able to find meaning and order in them. We see order in their disorder. That is, we have insight and use it.

This common experience may be further illustrated by a spade which is lying in my garden. I may use it to prepare the soil for the seed. But if a snake appears in the garden, I may use the spade to kill the snake. The spade and the garden have not changed. But in the one case ("configuration") the spade is an instrument to mellow the soil; in the other case it becomes a weapon. The original stimulus is there—the spade which bids me dig up the soil; but because I possess insight I change the spade into a weapon and make a totally different response to it.

But what has this theory to do with Christian teaching? It introduces into the teaching-learning process the qualities of insight and intelligence. Learning becomes purposive and not merely mechanical. Our task, then, as teachers is to help our pupils to exercise and develop this insight; to help them to see what is involved in the situations in which they find themselves, to see meanings in what they do, to exercise the power of selection or of choice. We can point out to them the probable effects of this or that kind of conduct. We can help them to find new meanings in their relationships with one another and with their world. Their playground may be a place for fighting and foul play or a place for fellowship and fair play according to the place it holds

in their pattern of life. Their home may be a place to exploit with their selfishness or a place to serve with their kindness. Even the Church School may become a situation to avoid or to rejoice in according to the particular pattern which it assumes. The point is that we can help our pupils to reshape their situations.

But how does it come about that man's behavior is purposive, that he has the ability to choose and will? The physiological psychologist finds his answer to the question in the structure of the nervous system. But surely the Christian teacher has a right also to the answer of religion—namely, that there is resident within us a soul that serves as the creative agent of our activities and choices. Man is so constituted that he chooses the factors in his environment to which he will respond. More than that, he creates factors that did not exist and puts them into his environment. He is not at the mercy of his environment. Man is such a creature also that he can express certain native impulses, curb and redirect others, and bring his conflicting instincts into a harmony and unity. He is not at the mercy of his instincts. There seems to be at the center of our being some inner monitor or pilot that is the source of our conviction that we ought to do this rather than that and that we are free to transcend our environment. To this inner pilot or agent the Christian religion has given the name "soul."

That the word is in disrepute in these days need not alarm us. It is not surprising that modern psychology (the science of the soul!) omits the "soul" from its vocabulary. For psychology is seeking to

be scientific, and science must deal with phenomena that can be observed, tested, and described. Therefore psychology confines its attention to the characteristic modes of mental behavior. Its primary concern is not to raise the question "Why?" but the question "How?" But religion, like philosophy, must ask, "Why?"

Nor need we be disturbed because we cannot describe the soul, nor locate it in our physical organism. Of course, it defies the surgeon's scalpel even when he operates upon the brain. It must be spiritual in nature, having no material form or substance. Sometimes it seems to be wholly resident in the body, for it drives the body and in turn is affected by the body. Again, as in dreams and reveries and long-range planning, it seems to be able to transcend the body. We can call it by other names—the whole self, the ego, the core of our being—but we cannot define its nature.

It is interesting in this connection to note that the writers of the Old and New Testaments did not try to define the soul, though they assumed its existence. They did, however, describe its activity. They spoke of the longing soul, the thirsty soul, the satisfied soul, the sorrowful soul, the striving soul. Their use of the word makes it synonymous with a man's real life or real self. It is affirmed, but never argued, that the soul derives its existence from God—that it is the soul of man which is made in the likeness of the spiritual God and therefore is imperishable.

This concept of the inner core of our being has great import for the Christian teacher. His pupil

is no longer just a cunningly devised organism of muscles, nerves, and brain cells. He is a God-given individual, with the power of choice and will and self-control. As such, his personality must be respected.

But this God-implanted soul is capable of expansion and growth. Apparently the soul develops according to the laws of learning—becomes a more stable control, a more creative agent, a more harmonizing principle, a surer detector of right and wrong, and is increasingly sensitive to the divine Presence. We do wrong if we regard the soul as complete, perfect, and static. It is a living, growing, dynamic reality and the Christian teacher's major business is to promote soul growth and power.

What Do We Mean by Direct Learning? If you will turn back to the introduction to this study, paragraph 2, you will note this question: "Can I not fashion my teaching so directly that my pupils will achieve one result rather than another?" This gives us a clue to our problem. Direct teaching is that kind of teaching which is carried through with a clear purpose. The teacher knows what he aims to do and bends all his energies to the doing of it. Direct learning, then, is the pupil's response to that kind of teaching. But the exact nature of it will depend upon what the teacher is trying to do and where he lays his emphasis.

Let us suppose, to take a concrete lesson, that you are teaching the incident of the Good Samaritan to a class of Juniors and that you have succeeded in persuading them to read the Scriptural story, Luke 10: 25-37, and the comments in the Quarterly. You have

helped them to locate on a map of Palestine the relative positions of Jerusalem and Jericho; to understand the perils that beset the traveler in that ancient time; to visualize the robbery on the Jericho road; to appreciate the attitude of the priest and of the Levite, who passed the wounded man by without rendering aid; to witness the arrival of the Good Samaritan and the relief of the wounded traveler as he was tenderly cared for by the roadside and later at the inn. By questions and answers, oral or written, you make sure that all your pupils are familiar with the details of the well-known story. They may quite properly be said to have "learned" the story of the Good Samaritan, if you define learning as the intellectual grasp of a body of facts. Perhaps that is all that you have tried to do. Your pupil, then, has learned what you tried to teach him. This is one type of direct learning.

But let us suppose that you have tried to do something more than this. You have wanted to awaken in your pupils a sense of appreciation of the moral values in that old story. You have tried to make them aware of the traveler's danger and suffering; disgusted with the indifference and studied cruelty of the priest and the Levite; sympathetic with the action of the Good Samaritan; and so sensitive to the whole situation that they will earnestly desire to be neighborly and helpful to any man, woman, or child who has fallen into distress. In this case, you see, you are teaching with the very definite purpose of changing the attitudes of your class. You may be consciously trying to alter their tendency to be cruel or calloused in the presence of need or you may be

strengthening an incipient attitude to be kind. You cannot honestly say that your pupils have "learned" the significance of the lesson unless they establish such a response to the story as you seek to cultivate in them. But if, by their conversation or the expression on their faces, they exhibit an awakened sense of their responsibility to help those who are in need, you may conclude that they have learned what you have tried to teach. But you see that you have in this case tried to do a very different thing from teaching the facts of the story. This is another type of direct learning.

Now let us go a step farther. Let us suppose that your purpose is to stimulate your pupils to act in some modern situation as the Good Samaritan acted in that ancient situation. Probably this is your real purpose. You want your pupils to go out from your classroom as Good Samaritans. To be sure, they will never meet wounded travelers on the Jerusalem-Jericho road, and probably will not overtake a pedestrian who has been struck by a hit-and-run driver on the street that leads from their church to their homes. But all along their way they will happen upon weak, discouraged, unfairly treated men and women and children. You show them that their wounded travelers will be their mothers, tired with housework; their younger brothers and sisters, to whose childish sufferings they have been indifferent; some playmate in school, who is quite miserable because he is habitually bullied. To all such persons your boys and girls have no doubt at times been quite indifferent. Like the priest and the Levite they have "passed by on the other side." Will they continue to be priests and

Levites? Or this afternoon will they be sensitive to some one else's need and actually behave as Good Samaritans, pouring into another's wounds the oil and wine of their own sympathy and helpfulness? Isn't that what you want them to do? Isn't that your real reason for teaching this lesson? This is a third type of direct learning. Which do you think is most worth striving for?

What Is Indirect, or Incidental, Learning? In Study I reference was made to incidental learning and its place in creative education. We must now examine it more fully and try to see its place in the teaching-learning process. Sometimes this type of learning is referred to as "indirect learning," or "concomitant learning." The terms are identical. They are phrases to express the common fact that along with the major or direct learnings of the lesson period there are by-products—subtle, intangible, and often unpredictable—that accompany or attend the lesson experience. Often these by-products are more important and vital than the so-called main products. Sometimes they are good, sometimes bad.

For example, you are teaching a lesson to your class. It may be an old-fashioned lesson taken from such a classical Old Testament incident as Jacob's deception of his father, Isaac; or it may be a very modern lesson built around a life situation in which one man played a trick upon another. What are you really teaching? What are your pupils learning? While you are trying to drive home your point, they may be learning the habit of inattention; they may be bored to death by your exhortation and be learning how to make themselves indifferent to the importance

of honor; they may be studying your peculiarities of dress or speech; or if you are irritated by their misbehavior and lose your temper, they may become skeptical about the sincerity of your religious life. They may even be learning to deceive you by pretending to be interested in what you are saying when their minds are a hundred miles away. These are incidental learnings. You do not purposely promote them. Your pupils do not consciously absorb them. They accompany what you consider to be the main business of the hour. But they are learnings none the less and they are preserved in the structure of your pupils' characters and transferred to their subsequent experience.

Conversely, these incidental learnings may be wholesome and valuable. You may be using the same lesson material referred to in the preceding paragraph. But you have so motivated your pupils' interest that they are learning the habit of attention and participation; you have so set the stage for the lesson that they are really concerned to find the results both of deception and of fair play; your spirit is so friendly and generous that they do not notice your clothing or your language; and if some unfortunate occurrence takes place in your classroom your dealing with it is so gracious and just that, long after your pupils have forgotten what you said about Jacob and Esau, they remember your high-minded and magnanimous spirit. Here, also, are incidental learnings and they accompany the main business of the hour; or, rather, they seem to accompany it, for they really are the main business. They are often the most significant and influential things you do as a

teacher. In this teaching-learning process, therefore, you will do well if you pay attention to them and try so to nourish your own spirit and improve your method that the by-products of your teaching may become an asset and not a liability.

Is There Transfer of Learning? The issues discussed and the illustrations cited in the preceding sections on direct and indirect learning raise another very important question. Do the lessons learned in Church School carry over into life? Does the training received in one situation help us to meet another situation?

There will probably occur to you as you read these words a number of varied experiences, from your childhood to your present life, which have strongly influenced your thinking and your conduct. You recall your mother's insistence that you keep your room in order and your person neat and clean; a lie you told which caused your father to talk seriously and sorrowfully with you; a series of painful efforts to master the multiplication tables or to compute interest; a service of worship at camp or by a lakeside when you seemed to feel a Presence; a class led by your minister which set you to thinking seriously about joining the Church; a meeting with some person who had achieved greatness in his work or profession. You feel sure that these experiences have had a lasting effect upon you. At least you know that your room is in order, that you keep your promises and pay your bills, use numbers and figure interest, are loyal to the Church and find strength and peace in its worship, and work hard in your profession. You feel sure that you are making use of previous experiences

in new situations. In other words, you believe in transfer of learning.

Let us say at once that if there were no transfer there would be no learning. If nothing remained from our study and experience to help us in solving new problems and situations, we should be like a child's slate, washed clean after each picture has been finished. The question is not, "Is there transfer of learning?" but "How may transfer of learning be promoted in our teaching process?"

It seems clear, both from our own experience and from the tests that have been made, that transfer from what we have learned to a new situation or problem depends a great deal on whether our learning took place in connection with a particular concrete situation or was merely abstract general learning. We may study and reflect upon the quality of honesty. But that does not guarantee that when we face a situation we shall be honest. On the other hand, if we learn to practice honesty in dealing with a particular person and see the issues that are involved in being honest with him, we shall be more likely to be honest when we have dealings with other persons. In other words, our learning must not be divorced from real life.

Again, we observe that our learning is more likely to be transferred when there are similarities between the new situation, "B," and the old situation, "A," where our learning occurred. What happens is this: When we face the new situation, "B," we discover in it elements which resemble those which we met and solved in situation "A." We say, "This is not an entirely new problem." So we proceed to analyze it

or "break it down" until we recognize some of the old meanings which we discovered and employed in the previous experience. "We have transfer of training," says Professor Bode, "just in so far as the new situation is illuminated and transformed by the background of old experience."⁵ We do this as we apply old meanings to new situations. This is the way learning helps us to come to grips with unforeseen problems. If it were not for this transfer we should be at the mercy of every new experience that confronts us.

But once more we are aware that there is danger in restricting our learning to the particular situation in which the learning took place. We must generalize about it. For example, we may discover that in the neighborhood where we live it is best to treat our neighbors' property and rights with consideration and respect. Too often, however, we think that this lesson applies only to the neighbors on our own street. But if we generalize our learning, we find out that neighborliness is an attitude that is best in our dealings with everybody—with groups in the community, with races, and with nations. It is only when the attitude of neighborliness is lifted out of the particular situation where we learned it and is seen to be an attitude that has universal value that we transfer that attitude to the larger problems and situations that confront us in the community and the world.

This fact leads Professor Gates to say that our "methods, habits, and attitudes must be trained, not in one or a few, but in many situations. There should, then, be a generalization of desirable methods, ideals, and attitudes. They should not be allowed to lie im-

⁵ Bode, *op. cit.*, pp. 101 ff.

bedded in particular cases. . . . The amount of transfer depends in a measure on how we are instructed; and on how we are led to react; and on how well we understand or generalize our experience.”⁶

As a teacher you will do well to reflect upon the bearing of this discussion on the teaching of the story of the Good Samaritan. (Compare the section on direct learning, which contained many references to transfer.) If you present that story in a factual way, you must not be surprised if the facts do not translate themselves into the conduct of your pupils. But if you give your pupils an opportunity to be Good Samaritans in several typical situations and help them to generalize about their experiences, you may build up within them the Good Samaritan attitude and character.

Are Learning and Habit Formation Identical?

As a Christian teacher you need not be reminded that you are concerned to establish in your pupils dependable habits of truth-telling, fair play, kindness, cooperation, and reverence. But what are habits, and how are they formed?

Habit is a learned response to a situation. When you were first asked to do some little service for your mother and responded to her request by doing it promptly, you began to form the habit of helpfulness and promptness. As you responded to her request in similar fashion time after time, the habit became stronger. You might properly say that you learned

⁶Gates, Arthur I., “Psychology for Students of Education,” p. 371. The Macmillan Company, 1923. Used by permission.

the habit of helpfulness and promptness, for learning and habit formation are identical.

Our habits, or our learnings, are legion. Some are physical, like lacing our shoes; some are mental, like adding two and five; some are temperamental, like keeping one's poise; some are moral, like telling the truth; and some are spiritual, like the habit of prayer. Habits may be good or bad, social or unsocial. But they are all learned or formed by the same process. "Habit," we are reminded, "in its simplest form is the tendency to do, think, or act as one has done, thought, or acted in the past."⁷

Perhaps we have been told that as Christian teachers we should drill our pupils in the repeated exercise of any type of conduct which we wish them to practice. But this is not the whole story and may turn out to be futile. For the laws of habit formation are the laws of learning,⁸ described in the preceding study. William James pointed them out long ago. "Launch a habit with zest," he told his readers. Here we see the bearing upon habit of the principle of primacy and the law of readiness. It is true that first impressions last longest and that our first responses to a situation are remembered. We cannot be too careful, therefore, in seeing that those first responses are Christian. This pushes responsibility for habit formation back into the home where parents are teaching their children in their tender years. It

⁷ Strayer and Norsworthy, "How to Teach," p. 55. The Macmillan Company, 1918. Used by permission.

⁸ Note. For an extended and useful treatment of the relation of habit formation and the learning process, cf. Powell, Wilfred E., "The Growth of Christian Personality," Chapters V, VI. The Bethany Press, 1929.

is true also that we tend to give the right response to situations when we are ready for them. (Recall the law of readiness.) Many a habit which we have tried to form, or to help our pupils to form, has failed to mature because there was no enthusiasm for it. Watch out for interest and readiness. That is the time to "stamp a habit in."

Having launched a habit, we observe another principle which James suggested: "Never allow an exception to occur." This is just another way of stating the law of frequency. You know how your pupils resolve to do something for or with you—to study the lesson, to be on time, to coöperate in a project. For a month or so they practice what you suggest, and you think that the victory is won. There is a break or exception. They think that it doesn't matter. But it does matter. They will tend to make the exception again and again until the exception becomes the habit.

There is always a danger that habits will be prompted and enforced from outside. Your pupils do things because you prod them. You become a substitute for their own wills. But the only dependable habit is that which is enforced by our own desires. We find ourselves in many unpredictable situations when no external control is present. For example, if I hit a child, when driving my car, the law compels me to take him to the hospital. But if I am a passer-by and do not stop to aid the child, the law will not punish me. If I were not responsible for the child's injuries, nothing would drive me to bind up his wounds except the sympathy in my own heart. This is an inner control. In most cases where human

need exists, such controls are the only forces that compel us to act.

I remember talking with a friend once about this matter. He was a middle-aged man, much concerned for the moral welfare of his daughter, a high school girl. The school parties which she attended, with their mixture of automobiles and liquor, were making him anxious. He said: "I can't go with her to protect her. She would think it an intrusion upon her freedom. I can't send a chaperon with her. It isn't the custom. I suppose all I can do is to help her to put a chaperon in her heart." This is our task as teachers—to help our pupils to build good habits in their hearts.

What Shall We Do with Individual Differences? It is not my purpose to deal here with the techniques by which individual differences have been discovered or measured, or with the causes which are responsible for such differences. The reader will find it profitable, however, to examine at this point a very illuminating chapter on these matters in Professor Powell's "The Growth of Christian Personality."⁹ What I am concerned to indicate is that scientific studies have confirmed your own observations that John may differ from James in almost every particular—in physical size and appearance; in intelligence and insight; in desire to be right and ability to do right; in friendliness, coöperativeness, and sensitivity to spiritual influences. Some of these differences are due to heredity, and some to background, training, and culture.

Since this is so, you should frankly recognize that

⁹ Powell, *op. cit.*, Chapter IV.

such differences exist in your class. Part of our difficulty in teaching is due to the fact that we treat a class as a *class*. Instead of remembering that our pupils are individuals, with very distinct abilities, interests, and tastes, we lump them together and proceed to deal with them as if they were a composite photograph. What we should do is to treat each member of the class as a person with distinct needs and capacities.

Without doubt our task would be simplified if greater care were exercised in the grouping of our pupils into classes. The members of some of our Church School classes have little in common except their age and size. Their interests and abilities are so diverse that it is almost impossible for them to study or play or work together. It would be well, therefore, to try to secure a more homogeneous grouping of the pupils in our schools, as is being done in progressive education.

When this has been accomplished, as far as local circumstances will permit, you must then set yourself to the task of discovering what the members of your class have in common. Let us suppose that they are high school students. The fact that they have reached high school shows that they have more than average intelligence, and the fact that they are in high school assures you that their interests center largely in its work, its athletics, its parties, and in the friendships made there. Of course, they have other common interests—in their homes, in their future jobs, in members of the opposite sex, in the ongoing life of the community, in the radio, the movies, the newspaper, the church, the Young People's Society, in your

class, and in you. The description of the interests of high school students in books dealing with adolescent characteristics will help you to know what to look for in the lives of your students. But you must be sure to know them as individuals for you will find that, while they have much in common, they are never alike. However, if they had nothing in common, your class as a class could not exist.

Within the framework of your course or project, which you will want them to help you to plan, you can provide for their individual abilities and capacities. You can suit your special assignments to their preferences. You can ask John to be responsible for that part of your program which he enjoys doing. Thus you make use of a variety of talents and tastes and each pupil makes his contribution to the business of the hour. In this way you can hold the attention of both the exceptional student and the dull student, by "taking the measure of each" and suiting the task to the capacity of each. While you must not forget the needs of any of your students, you will be justified, I think, in paying particular attention to the exceptional ones. Don't allow them to become bored. Give them special assignments a little beyond their powers; encourage their curiosity about the meanings of life; train them in leadership by consulting with them about the problems of your own leadership. "Stir up the gift of God, which is in them."

Finally, we teachers must never forget that our students have some needs and problems which are so intimate and personal that they can never be brought into a class discussion. In our homes, or on

walks together, or wherever the opportunity arises, we must talk with our students one by one. Sometimes we shall seek them out; often they will come to us. We shall talk about life as they are finding it to be—about their hopes and fears, their loves and jealousies, their joys and disappointments. Blessed is that teacher to whom the student comes!

What Is Distinctive in Christian Learning?

Many persons believe that the teaching-learning process is the same in both secular and religious education; that whether one is teaching the multiplication table or Christian worship the procedure will be identical. In a sense this is true. Your pupil brings the same physical body to your class in the church that he takes to his day-school teacher—the same arms and legs, the same brain and nervous system, the same capacity to react to simple stimuli or to complex situations. The laws of learning also operate in both cases. Your pupil doesn't have a different mental equipment just because he is inside the Church School. His intelligence, his scholastic aptitudes, and his achievements would register in both the public school and the Church School at relatively the same figure on the scale of any of the approved tests. Incidental learnings of great importance are taking place in both the secular and the religious classroom. The methods of teaching need not be different; e.g., the technique of the discussion method is the same, whether one is discussing the pros and cons of the influence of climate upon behavior or the influence of prayer upon behavior.

But while these statements are true, we know that Christian education is distinguished from purely sec-

ular education by its spirit and its purpose. It is primarily concerned with religious living. Its aim is religious character. Its themes are moral and religious themes—that is, they deal with such values as honor, courage, love, faith in God, dependence upon God, and prayer. Moreover, those who teach in our Church Schools are supposed to be exemplars of these qualities and the atmosphere of the Church School is supposed to be conducive to the nurture of such qualities. It is tragic when this is not so.

Now such purposes and such an atmosphere are powerful factors in the teaching-learning process. They show the teacher where to lay his emphasis in his teaching. They are stimuli to which the pupil most definitely responds. They do affect the teacher's use of methods. For example, a secular school-teacher in using the project method might be content if his project were efficient; but the Church School teacher has no right to be content unless his pupils have become more efficient Christians. This difference in aim and spirit may work a rather subtle but none the less real effect upon the procedure of the Church School teacher. It will determine which tendencies in the pupil should be strengthened in order to build a Christian personality; what materials should be chosen as a part of the stimulating situation; and the degree of pupil initiative and coöperation that should be sought. Less emphasis will be laid upon knowledge and more upon character. And the teacher will look well to those factors which may produce the most Christian incidental learnings. In short, the Church School teacher should understand the working of the teaching-learning process and

make intelligent use of its laws. But in so doing he should not forget the major aims and atmosphere of Christian education. We shall deal with these aims in the next study.

Summary. In this study I have taken the position that our learning is not at the mercy of our instincts or our environment but may be purposive, or willed by the inward self which we call the "soul"; that there are two major types of learning—the direct type, which as teachers we purposefully promote, and the indirect, or incidental, type, which consists of subtle, intangible, but often powerful by-products of our teaching; that the transfer of learning more readily occurs when learning is related to specific life situations; that learning (broadly interpreted) and habit formation are identical and are subject to the same procedures; and that the distinctive quality of Christian learning is not to be found in the process but in our aims and in the atmosphere and spirit of the total teaching-learning situation.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL STUDY AND THOUGHT

1. How would you account for the element of purpose in learning?
2. Make a list of your personal experiences which seem to have been planned or willed by yourself.
3. Which type of direct learning, illustrated by the examples of the Good Samaritan story, are you trying to promote and why?
4. What incidental learnings are taking place in your class? How can you find out?
5. Why do you think some teachers secure more transfer of training than others?
6. Do you believe that the habits of your pupils are being affected by your teaching? What habits?
7. What individual differences have you discovered among

the members of your class? What use are you making of your discovery?

8. Write out a description of the atmosphere of your class session. How does it differ from a classroom in the public school? Is it more Christian? In what respect?

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STUDY IV

THE IMPORTANCE OF AIMS IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

In the modern books and magazines for teachers one often comes across new phrases which are meaningless until they are translated into common speech. The following have been caricatured as "educational jargon": ultimate objectives, proximate objectives, immediate objectives, end results, procedures, teaching outcomes, meaningful procedures. But these phrases are just different ways of asking one searching question, "What are you driving at?" They do not want to know *what* you are teaching, but *why* you are teaching; not the subject of your lesson, but its object. Very pointedly, and sometimes embarrassingly, they ask, "What are you trying to do for your pupil, or with your group, or during a lesson period, or throughout a course?" They challenge you to define the purpose of the Church School in which you are serving and even the goal of the entire Christian enterprise.

Perhaps a series of questions like these surprises you. It "catches you up." You had thought you were teaching because your pastor or your superintendent urged you to. You yielded from a sense of duty. Here was a class without a teacher. Besides, when you were a child, some older person whose memory you revere taught you. But why should you, or anyone for that matter, be asked to teach and why should you feel that you ought to teach?

Perchance the questions stagger you. You wonder whether you have ever seriously asked, "Why do I teach?" You may have just drifted along from Sunday to Sunday. You have "prepared your lesson," but to what end? How can you find out what you ought to be trying to do and what Christian education is driving at? Who has a right to tell you?

These are the problems to which this study is addressed: What do we mean by aims? What do we mean by ultimate and immediate aims? How are ultimate aims determined? How

are immediate aims discovered? What is distinctive about the aims of Christian education?

Perhaps I shall be saying what you have long been thinking. Perchance my words may help to sharpen your own purpose. May I suggest that as you read, you pause frequently to ask, "What is *my* aim?"

What Do We Mean by Aims? I have chosen the simple word "aim" because its meaning is suggestive. By long usage, it refers to the direction in which an arrow or a gun is pointed with the particular purpose of hitting the bull's-eye of the target or the object of the hunt. It has come also to mean the object intended to be hit or the end intended to be attained. So we say that a person has a "good aim" when he sees his target clearly and hits it. The word has also a number of derived meanings—end, object, purpose, intention. But we do well to keep the original concrete meaning before us and to ask: "What am I trying to hit in my teaching? What is my target? Is my arrow pointed in the right direction?"

Perhaps too much of our teaching has been aimless and reminds us of Longfellow's "The Arrow and the Song":

I shot an arrow into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where.

That the arrow, long afterward, was found unbroken in an oak, was due to chance not to aim. In like manner, some of our random teaching has found lodgment in the hearts of our pupils in spite of the fact that it was aimless; not because of chance, perhaps, but because we were persons of character, or because our pupils were sensitive to our influence.

If our use of the word aim seems to oscillate be-

tween "end" and "direction" it is not untrue to experience. For the skillful teacher must always be thinking both of his target and of his arrow; that is, his goal and his method are inextricably mingled in the teaching process.

What Do We Mean by Ultimate and Immediate Aims? In much of the modern educational literature upon this subject, an effort has been made to distinguish between the remote and the near, between the general and the particular. So we find writers using the terms "comprehensive" versus "specific" aims; "ultimate" versus "proximate," or "immediate," aims. What they are saying is that there are far-off horizons toward which our eyes must always be lifted as we travel, but that the day's journey requires one step at a time.

Life itself, like a teacher's task, bears a striking resemblance to a journey. We have the feeling, if not the conviction, that we are bound for some distant shore—that our life is more than "a sleep and a forgetting," that it has an eternal meaning and a final goal. We cannot fully comprehend that goal. But our thought of it is bound up with the nature and purpose of the God whom we have come to know in Jesus Christ. It is a distant goal. It does not lie in the present, but in the future, and for many in the life beyond. It is an ultimate goal in the sense that nothing lies beyond it. It is a comprehensive goal, for it embraces all true and enduring experiences. Nothing lies outside it. But our understanding of its nature is always a growing and elusive experience, for the nearer we come to it, the farther it recedes from us. We are like those who walk hard mountain

trails, and, coming to the top of a ridge, glimpse an endless succession of ranges that lie outstretched in the dim distance. So the aspiring soul always discovers that his "reach" exceeds his "grasp."

In our teaching there is, or ought to be, always the same sense of a *beyond*. We are trying to do something which has no mere passing significance. We shall be concerned of course with the present-day world in which we and our pupils live, but we shall not regard our present task as final.

Our fathers found it difficult to think about these matters without centering their attention upon the future life. But that is not all we mean by ultimate aims. We are thinking more especially of the entire span of a pupil's life from birth to death, with its growth in Christian character and usefulness. We have in mind his contribution to our ongoing Christian civilization, in which our successors here on earth will participate. We would include also the unbroken life of the other world, in which our Christian faith leads us to believe. But all these belong together. They are parts of the whole of life. They are all of one piece. And we cannot evade our responsibility for this whole. It is our *ultimate* aim.

Over against this aspect of the matter, which sounds somewhat hazy to many modern folk, stands the immediate present, with its needs, its problems, and its activities. There is the universal desire for food, shelter, and physical well-being; the need for the mastery of certain tool subjects—reading and writing and a host of other skills; the problem of learning a trade or of preparing one's self for a profession and becoming successful in the same; the im-

portance of establishing a home and of proving one's self a worthy member of it; the problem of making a wise use of the increased leisure that is at our disposal; the necessity for developing a body of citizens in the community and the state who shall be coöperative to the point of self-sacrifice, but at the same time constructively critical of our institutions and our customs. With respect to the importance of such aims as these practically all educators are in agreement.

But while these aims are concerned with our present earthly life, they are also major segments of a great battle front by which we are seeking to achieve Christian character and a Christian social order both for the here and for the hereafter. They, too, are long-range aims which can never be achieved in the present. Occupational efficiency, worthy home membership, and good citizenship are the persisting directions of a lifetime's struggle and are never achieved with anything like perfection by any of us. In that sense they partake of the nature of ultimate aims.

But there are other aims which are highly specific and capable of realization in the here and now: to learn to swim, to master the scale of G sharp, to keep one's room in order, to develop a taste for a good book, to minister to a friend in his distress, to tell the truth when it hurts, to find out why Jesus went to his church on the Sabbath, to establish the habit of meaningful worship. These are concrete aims, attainable and immediate. They are as sharply defined as a target, into the heart of which one can sink his arrow.

They are related, however, to the ultimate aims of which we have been thinking as parts are related to a

whole. To learn to swim is a step on the road to physical health; mastering a scale, to becoming a virtuoso; keeping one's room in order, to being a worthy member of a home; developing a taste for a good book, to a fruitful use of leisure; being loyal to a friend, to being loyal to society or the state; telling the truth, to growth in moral character; finding out why Jesus went to his church, to an understanding of his spirit and his contribution to religion; attending worship, to fellowship with God. These seemingly unimportant activities are highly specific and concrete attempts to hit one of the major targets of our complex modern life. They, and a host of activities like them, are of immediate moment. Hence we call them immediate aims. They are of the same stuff as ultimate aims but they are simpler, more concrete, and nearer at hand. That is the difference.

It is like a man starting on a journey from New York to Jerusalem. Jerusalem is his ultimate aim. He must not allow himself to forget where he is going. But his immediate aim is to get from his home to the pier, then to his steamer, then across the Atlantic, then through the Mediterranean to Jerusalem. Each immediate stage of the journey is determined by the final destination as well as by the spot where the person happens to be.

In the same way our ultimate aim, as teachers in the Church School, is the transforming of the lives of our pupils and of our world by the spirit of Christ. We must never forget that goal. But our immediate aim is to meet to-day's problems to-day and needs of to-morrow to-morrow in that same spirit. So, and

only so, can we hope to journey progressively toward our ultimate goal.

How Are Ultimate Aims Determined? There are two ways, at least, by which men have undertaken to discover the ultimate aims for secular and religious education. The first may be characterized as the way of reflection. The noblest minds of the race have reflected upon the meaning and the end of life. They have meditated upon the nature of man and of the universe which is his home. They have studied the history of man's life upon the earth to discover the persistent ends which he has sought to achieve and which he has come to regard as having a timeless value. They have mused upon the character and purpose of the Creator and Sustainer of life. They have set down in the form of poetry or prophecy or philosophy the results of their reflection. These findings have been handed on from generation to generation and have become the prized possession of mankind. They are the gift to man of the most mature and idealistic intuition and meditation of the race.

More than three thousand years ago, the Hebrew prophet and lawgiver, Moses, became sensitive to the divine revelation and, having thus discovered the eternal values in the moral and religious experiences of mankind, crystallized those values into the Ten Commandments. A few centuries later, the Prophet Amos espoused the aim of human justice as God's paramount purpose for mankind; likewise the Prophet Hosea seized upon the aim of love; and similarly the Prophet Isaiah, in impassioned oratory, pleaded for the concept of humble obedience to God. A still later prophet, Micah, combined these three

aims into his classic purpose: "What doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Micah 6:8. Since that day a variety of mature prophetic minds have tried to state the ultimate ends of life. Jesus of Nazareth summed up his answer to the problem in a well-known statement: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," Matt. 22:37-39.

To-day, in the field of religious education, it has become our habit to define the nature and end of religion in a similar fashion—i.e., in terms, not of creeds or ecclesiastical formulas, but in terms of life. We start with the recurring and tested results of man's experience with the best life he knows or has dreamed of. Hence there is among us a desire to accept Jesus' answer as a final word—a desire to get at the real character and spirit of Jesus and to make his way of life applicable to all men and available for all men; to relate his teachings to our present-day personal, social, economic, and political problems; to develop persons who shall be increasingly like him; to establish on earth a Christian social order; to promote mutual understanding, coöperation, and service between all groups, societies, races, and nations. These aims, now generally accepted among Christian leaders, and especially by Christian educators,¹ have not been arrived at apart from the observation of life and experience with it. But they transcend present

¹ Cf. a study by Vieth, Paul H., "Objectives in Religious Education." Harper & Brothers, 1930.

practice and experience. They are primarily the result of sober reflection and a reverent contemplation of the purpose of God as revealed in Christ.

A second way by which ultimate aims have been determined may be described as "scientific." We are being told that our aims in teaching religion should be set up in the light of what modern society needs. We must start with the activities in which people, young and old, engage. We should take a community, or a cross section of it, and make a thorough and critical analysis of what is happening there. Such a study will reveal certain major purposes which the people of that community cherish and the corresponding activities through which they are seeking to achieve them. We shall take such major purposes and activities and single out those which are regarded as most typical, most persistent, and most beneficial, both for the individual and for the community as a whole. These will indicate our ultimate aims.

When we make such a study, what do we discover? Allowing for the variations that are due to the size, character, and location of our communities, we find that people generally are concerned for their physical health and the health of their communities; for the security, happiness, and wholesomeness of their home life; for enlarging the range of their interests and outlets during their leisure hours; for the growth in wealth, power, prestige, and influence of themselves and their children; for their vocational success, with its accompaniment of permanent employment, adequate wages, and satisfaction in their work; for the welfare of the community, the state, and the world,

and intelligent participation in the same; for standards of moral character and their embodiment in personal living and in social relationships; for membership in and devotion to some institution or movement which gives opportunity for the expression of one's urge to worship God and to be of service to one's fellow men. These are the major concerns of our present-day society. These are the aims which a scientific study of any community will probably reveal. To be sure, in one community some of these aims may be overemphasized; and in a different type of community other aims may be underemphasized. But in general these are the major aims of our twentieth century American life. They do not have to be guessed at. A scientific and realistic approach to modern life discloses them. Of course, these aims are not arrived at without reflection. But they are based primarily upon the study of present-day ongoing experience.

It must be obvious to the reader that ultimate aims, arrived at in this second way, may be transient in character. For example, the need for food and clothing—always a paramount concern of man—may assume tragic proportions in time of famine or of a prolonged economic depression. Again, in an era of materialistic success and pleasure, our religious growth and obligations may be lightly regarded. Hence it is always necessary to correct the ultimate aims arrived at scientifically by those aims which are arrived at by the long-range contemplation of history and of life. Only then can we see our present life in its true perspective. On the other hand, aims which are arrived at by reflection and faith alone may lack

the sense of reality and pertinency which comes from a study of the immediate present. That is why the searcher for ultimate aims must keep his eyes both on the past and on the present. He must be both a scientific observer and a philosopher. He must say at once, "I appeal to present experience *and* I appeal to faith!"

How Are Immediate Aims Discovered? Immediate aims as we have seen, unlike the far-off or comprehensive concerns of men, have to do with the immediate present. Your immediate aims as a teacher are to be found in the needs and interests, not of humanity in general, but of your pupils in particular. They can be discovered only as you come to know them in the daily life of your pupils.

There are many simple ways by which you may become acquainted with the members of your class. By casual contacts in the classroom, on a hike, at a picnic, or in your home, you listen and observe and watch the behavior of your pupils. In conversations, which are equally casual, you discover some experience which they wish to share with you or some need or problem which they want you to help them with. You note their reactions toward specific situations in their homes, in their school, in their amusements, or in their church; toward worship, toward the lessons or projects that are suggested, toward class participation, and toward ideas expressed by yourself or others. In conferences with the parents of your pupils, or with their day-school teachers, you add to your store of information about them.

It will be helpful in making these casual contacts if you know what to look for and what you may rea-

sonably expect to discover. The reading of books which set forth the "areas of experience" in which pupils of the age of your boys and girls are participating will be highly informative and suggestive. Such "areas" are listed with much detail for each age level in *The International Curriculum Guide*.²

Let us suppose, to take a concrete case, that you are teaching in the Intermediate, or junior high school, Department of your Church School. Your pupils range in age from twelve to fourteen and are in public school grades seven and eight. (Some may be in grades six or nine and others in the first year of high school.) What kinds of questions are they asking? What types of experience are they having? What problems are they facing? What are their personal needs and habits? With due allowance for individual differences and community variations, you are likely to find that their "areas of experience" will fall into the realms of health, education, vocations, citizenship, home membership, recreation and leisure, sex relationships, friendship, morals, and religion.

If you will turn to the *Curriculum Guide*,³ you will find that each one of these areas is described in much detail. For example, in the area of health, Intermediates "desire physical strength so as to share in games and be on athletic teams; are awkward in

² *The International Curriculum Guide*, Books One, Two, and Three. Published in tentative form by The International Council of Religious Education.

³ *Op. cit.*, Book Three, pp. 19-52. Most of the material in the following paragraphs is based upon the researches cited in these pages. Copyright by The International Council of Religious Education and used by permission.

managing their bodies''; are allowing social events to interfere with their hours of sleep; are becoming conscious of the physical manifestations of sex. Some of them are suffering from postural defects, malnutrition, lack of proper care of teeth, eyes, and digestive organs. Others are becoming aware of social health needs, pure food regulations, contagious diseases, quarantine laws, et cetera.

In the area of vocations, they are aware of the social stratum in which their father's vocation compels them to live; are troubled by the fear or fact of unemployment; are conscious of the infinite variety of occupations by which adults support themselves; are questioning the relative worth of such occupations; have begun to wonder what their future occupation is to be and how they are to prepare for it; have become critical of the practical usefulness of many of their school subjects; want to leave school and get a job so that they may have their own spending money or may assist in maintaining the family.

In the area of recreation, Intermediates are interested in such games as basketball, football, baseball, driving an automobile; they read the newspapers and magazines; attend socials, parties, picnics, and dances; patronize the movies (at intervals ranging from once a month to several times a week). Many are enamored with moving picture actors and actresses. Their rooms will often be decorated with pictures of their favorite stars. The children of the more comfortably circumstanced parents may spend their summers in the country or at summer camps; the majority remain in the city after school closes. Their leisure activities may be directed or undirected,

wholesome or unwholesome. This statement applies to their reading, their social affairs, their choice of companions, et cetera.

In the area of their general social relationships, they may be respectful, generous, and helpful toward others or prejudiced and contemptuous: for example, toward less favored young people, other races (colored or foreign), servants and tradesmen, older persons, property rights, their teachers, their friends who have been more successful than they in school, athletics, or social affairs.

In the realm of the æsthetic, they may feel "close to nature" and love the out of doors, camping, hiking, gardening, trail-making; they may enjoy music, the drama, painting, and architecture; they may have developed skill in the manual arts, sewing, copper, pottery, and the like; they may be sensitive to the beautiful in the lives of people—courtesy, graciousness, unselfishness, sacrificial helpfulness. They may, on the contrary, be blind to beauty, contemptuous of it, or indifferent to it.

In the area of religious experience, we find that some Intermediates are continuing to use the prayers of their childhood, while others are doubting the value of prayer and discontinuing its practice; some are reading the Bible intelligently and others are ceasing to read it because they don't understand it or because they believe it has no value; they are asking questions about the existence and nature of God, the fact of life after death, the place of Jesus in religion; some go to church with their parents, others object to going because it means so little to them; some attend the Sunday School and participate in its life,

others are indifferent to it and want to stay away; many of them join the Church at this period, usually without emotional upheaval and sometimes without understanding what they are doing or why; they ask questions about baptism and the Lord's Supper; they begin to be interested in other denominations and religions and wonder how they came to exist; they take part in a variety of church activities, socials, the Church School, the Young People's Society, plays and pageants, and begin to contribute to some organization of the church or to the church budget.

Obviously, the Intermediates in your class are not interested in all these matters. The areas of their experience may be wider than those just indicated or much narrower. Your pupils may be very much "alive" to certain areas of experience and quite "dead" to others. What I am suggesting here is that on the basis of a somewhat detailed picture of Intermediate interests you should endeavor to discover what your Intermediates are doing and thinking and desiring. You will certainly not make the mistake of fitting them into the picture which I have just drawn. On the other hand, you must not make the mistake, on Sunday morning, of thinking that your boys or girls are not interested in many of these matters. They are probably "alive" at a great many more points than you have imagined. It will be wise for you, therefore, to read the Curriculum Guide, for the age level you are teaching, and make out a list of questions—from ten to fifty in all—which you will keep in the back of your mind as you make those casual contacts referred to earlier

in this section. Your questions will surely include all the areas mentioned here, from health to religion.

On the basis of the interests, needs, and problems which you discover in your own group, you will then set up your immediate aims. Let us suppose that your Tom is having difficulty with his health habits. Then your aim is to help him to develop a Christian ideal for such habits and to stick to them. Perhaps he is tired of school and wants to stop. Then your aim is to help him to appreciate the value of an education and to change his attitude toward his school and his teachers. He may be spending more money on needless things than his family can afford. Your aim is to help him to understand how he can share his father's vocational load. Perhaps he is frittering away his leisure time and engaging in recreation that does not re-create him. Your task is to help him to acquire a taste for wholesome and worth-while things in the community. Perchance his "besetting sin" is a surly disposition: he gets on badly with his parents, his schoolmates, his teachers, and those of less favored groups or races. Clearly your aim is to help him to overcome a dispositional condition which will continue to make him unpopular and unhappy. Or he may have come to doubt the existence of God, the importance of prayer, and the value of the Church. You must help him at these points.

I have taken Tom as an illustration of many areas of difficulty. Now let us look at Bill. He has his needs and problems also. But he is strong where Tom is weak and you find in him a desire for a richer and fuller participation in all these Intermediate experiences. Your aim in dealing with Bill is to

appreciate and commend him and to encourage him to develop those interests and aptitudes which he already has.

I might continue with examples, but space does not permit. The point I trust is clear. As a teacher you must always start with your pupils' needs and interests. This is your point of departure. But you must know where you are going. A journey always involves a point of departure and a destination. So you must always keep in mind the ultimate aims which we discussed in the former section of this study. They are the goals where you want finally to arrive. Then in the light of those ultimate aims and your pupils' present needs and interests you ask: "What ought I to do to-day, or next Sunday, or this month? What ought I to do now which will take my pupils from where they are and bring them a step nearer our ultimate goal?" Your answer to this question will be your *immediate* aim.

What Is Distinctive in the Aims of Christian Education? The criticism is sometimes advanced that our modern Church Schools are not different from progressive public and private secular schools. A friend whose field is secular education remarked to me recently: "Your methods seem to be the same as ours; your projects are social or philanthropic; your emphasis is upon character and personality growth. Your materials are increasingly non-Biblical and the name of God is mentioned quite as casually as if the schools were not held under religious auspices. What is the difference between us?"

In all truth it must be said that if the Christian educator is concerned to improve the present life of

his pupils, if his purpose is to enrich their experience so that it may become more significant, then he must be striving, like his fellow teachers in the secular field, to help them to live more abundantly on the level of their present experience. Their health, their homes, their leisure, their occupational activities, and their participation in the life of larger groups must be the concern of the religious educator. He, too, is striving for an abundant life that is marked by high moral character and social sensitivity and responsibility. And this is precisely what the farseeing progressive public educator is trying to do.

What else can be said for the aim of the Christian educator? In my judgment, his greatest task is to bring the whole weight of the Christian gospel to bear upon the entire range of our present ideas and activities so that they may be enriched by the spirit of Jesus' life and teachings. The Christian is not to become a recluse. He is to live in the modern world, not apart from it. But he is to think of it as his Father's world, and of himself as a partner in his Father's enterprise. Its manifold and variegated life is to be motivated by the spirit of his Master. Its quality is to be deepened and purified by an undergirding faith in God and in the value of all that Jesus did and said. The Christian educator is not in step with his Master when he sets up aims, ultimate or immediate, which are so highly specialized that they do not "gear into" the aims of secular education or the business of our everyday life.

To be sure, certain leaders in Christian education have emphasized the importance of highly specific

and exclusive Christian aims. Professor Vieth,⁴ on the basis of his study of the writings of ten leaders in the field of Christian education, came to the conclusion that there are seven aims which they hold in common. At first sight, they seem to be exclusive. They are:

"1. To foster in growing persons a consciousness of God as a reality in human experience and a sense of personal relationship with him.

"2. To lead growing persons into an understanding and appreciation of the personality, life, and teaching of Jesus Christ.

"3. To foster in growing persons a progressive and continuous development of Christlike character.

"4. To develop in growing persons the ability and disposition to participate in and contribute constructively to the building of a social order embodying the ideal of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

"5. To lead growing persons to build a life philosophy on the basis of a Christian interpretation of life and the universe.

"6. To develop in growing persons the ability and disposition to participate in the organized society of Christians—the Church.

"7. To effect in growing persons the assimilation of the best religious experience of the race, as effective guidance to present experience."

But Professor Vieth does not mean⁵—and surely those whose writings he studied and from which he has quoted do not mean—that we must ever allow ourselves to divorce our Christian purpose from the

⁴ Vieth, Paul H., "Objectives in Religious Education," Chapter V. Harper & Brothers, 1930.

⁵ Cf. his chapter on "The Good Society as Objective," *op. cit.*, Chapter IX.

present, ongoing life of our pupils in this present world. We are not to help them to know the "best religious experience of the race"—the Bible and other religious material—as an end in itself, but as a guide to their present experience. They are not even to develop a personal consciousness of God, or personal relationship with Christ, just for their own personal satisfaction. All these aims, which have been so widely quoted and accepted, are emphases upon a certain quality of moral and spiritual living which should permeate and interpenetrate the entire structure and function of our modern life. Fellowship with God, an appreciation of the spirit of Jesus, knowledge of the Bible, membership in the Church, and the growth of a Christian philosophy of life are all to lead straight into and give quality to all the activities of our modern world. They are to touch and change our work, our play, our homes, and our relationships. They are to impart their spirit to all the life of this present world, which must take on a new quality and new forms adequate to the expression of that new spirit (compare aim "4" in above list).

May we not then answer our question in this fashion: The distinctive character of our Christian aims is not to be found in certain segregated areas of experience but rather in that particular quality which Christian education imparts to all experience. The test of our work is the degree to which we, as co-workers with God, are changing the inner quality of all experience.

Summary. In this study, I have suggested that as Christian teachers we need to have a clear-cut idea of what we are trying to do; that our ultimate or

long-range aims are determined by reflection upon the divine revelation and human experience and by a scientific study of what modern society cares for and does; that our immediate aims must be determined both from the present interests of our pupils and from what we want them to become and do; and that we should strive to vitalize all the beliefs and activities of our world with the Christian faith and spirit.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL STUDY AND THOUGHT

1. When you say, "My aim in teaching is to _____," what do you mean by the word "aim"?
2. What aims—ultimate and immediate—are you setting up for your class?
3. With what degree of skill are you hitting your target?
4. Make a list of your pupils' interests and activities. In what way do you believe that Christian education can affect them?
5. Make a list of the more important activities which are happening in your community. What reasons are given for engaging in them?
6. Compare such lists with those mentioned in this study.
7. Are the aims which your fellow townsmen are striving to achieve Christian aims? How would you try to improve their quality?

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STUDY V

THE PLACE OF THE PUPIL IN CHRISTIAN LEARNING

One of the most popular tales of an ideal teacher-pupil relationship describes Mark Hopkins sitting on one end of a log and his student on the other. When I first heard the story my attention was riveted upon President Hopkins and my inclination was to congratulate the student who had a monopoly upon the time of so distinguished a teacher. But Hopkins was not sitting on the log alone, theorizing and dreaming. The student was there with him, presumably eager with questions and curious about the answers. And Hopkins was keenly aware of his student's presence, needs, and interests.

In every genuine teaching situation, two factors must always be present: yourself with your experience and knowledge, and your pupils with their actual concerns. The point at which your life and theirs must make contact is their needs, not yours. You must never forget that they are on the other end of the log, and that they are the only reason for your being there. You must be intelligently alive to their thinking and planning, to their dreams and desires. You must understand the kinds of situations in which they find themselves from day to day, the strain and tension under which they are living. How much do you really know about your pupils? Do they occupy first place in your teaching experience?

I shall be dealing with such personal problems as I discuss the major questions of this study: What do we mean by pupil interests and needs? Why must we reckon with pupil attitudes or their "mental set"? What are pupil situations? What kinds of pupil situations should we use?

What Do We Mean by Pupil Interests and Needs? A question certain to arise in any training

class is, "How can I gain and hold the interest of my pupils?" Usually the questioner is baffled by their indifference and by the problem of discipline. He is aware that interest has vanished and knows that without it his efforts are in vain.

He is quite right. We adults know that when our interest in a trip, in our work, in a friend, or in church worship weakens, we quit. When a patient ceases to care about getting well, he is "done for." Interest is of primary importance, for without it our activity loses its zest and drive.

But what is this quality upon which so much depends? In his monograph, "Interest and Effort in Education,"¹ Professor Dewey has reminded us that we use the word "interest" in three senses. First, we refer to an active quality of the person himself. We say that John "takes an interest" in his Sunday School class. We mean that he comes, takes part, and is concerned to have things go well. We mean that some quality of John's nature, closely related to his impulses, prompts or impels him to "spontaneous activity" in and for the class.

We use the word, also, of the object or person to which John's interest attaches itself. We say John *has* many interests—his play, his bicycle, his home, his school, his teacher and class in the Sunday School. Unless John finds some object about which his "interest can cluster" his enthusiasm will "relapse into empty feeling." These objects and persons help John to discover himself and furnish an outlet for his activity.

¹Dewey, John, "Interest and Effort in Education," pp. 16-21. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1913.

But we use the word in a third sense—a very personal sense—to signify John's "emotional recognition of something at stake." John cares for his class or his teacher. He appreciates them. He finds a pleasurable sensation in being present with or in working with his classmates and his teacher. When, therefore, one says that John is interested in Sunday School, one probably means that John's native impulses have attached themselves to some person or object or activity in the Sunday School and that he has found an emotional satisfaction in such an attachment.

In the light of this definition, let us think of another common problem. You have been asked to teach a class, and you have been given a Quarterly or textbook. You soon realize that you are expected to teach a series of printed lessons and to make them interesting. You try various devices. You ask questions, tell stories, use illustrations, promise prizes, provide parties. At times you seem to be holding the attention of your pupils. At other times, despite your enthusiasm and effort, they seem to be miles away. What is the matter?

Probably the lessons themselves are far removed from your pupils' natural interests, and no amount of "sugar coating" can "make them interesting." "I know of no more demoralizing doctrine—when taken literally," writes Professor Dewey, "than the assertion that *after* subject matter has been selected *then* the teacher should make it interesting."² For this doctrine assumes that a body of ready-made lesson material, which may be quite foreign to your

²Dewey, *op. cit.*, p. 23. Used by permission of and by arrangement with Houghton Mifflin Company.

pupils' own activities or concerns, can be made interesting to them by some "artificial devices," some trick of teaching technique that will capture and hold attention. This you have been trying to do, and you have failed.

What, then, can you do? You can start with the interests and needs of your pupils. You can discover what they are doing in their homes, in their school, and in their leisure hours; what they would like to be doing; what their hopes and dreams are; their tastes, hobbies, and characteristics. This picture of your pupils, which you must construct for yourself out of your reading, your observation of their behavior, and your conversation with them, will be a picture of their interests. Your problem then is to select those subjects for study, those questions for discussion, and those activity projects which are directly related to your pupils' present powers and concerns. If you can do this you will discover that the secret of interest is to be found in the nature of the material or of the activity itself. It will be interesting for its own sake, because it strikes a responsive chord in the experience of your pupils. That is to say, the secret of interest is not to be found in sugar coating uninteresting material, but in the selection of material inherently interesting. "The root idea of interest (*interesse*—to be between)," Professor Dewey says, "is that of being engrossed entirely with some activity of recognized worth. It marks the annihilation of the distance between the person and the materials."³ How this approach will affect your choice and use

³ Dewey, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

of formal lesson material is another problem and will be dealt with in Study VII.

You can count on the appearance of certain interests in every normal group of boys or girls. For example, if you have a class of Juniors, you can be reasonably sure that they will be physically active. They will enjoy making noise and confusion. They will be fond of wrestling, skating, climbing, baseball. They will be curious to try out new ways of doing things; to see what their world is, how it is made, and how it is run. They will be attracted to persons who do heroic things, who embody physical and moral courage and daring. They will be self-assertive, independent, anxious to show off their prowess. They will not want to be thought sentimental. They will probably have a strong sense of honor. They will stick to their group or gang and tell no tales that would involve their pals. Their religion will doubtless be of an active and practical sort. They will likely associate it with everyday virtues—doing a good turn, helping others, playing fair. They will respond to strong leadership but will not be easily fooled by the would-be leader who lacks skill, poise, courage, and the ability to command respect.

The reading of books which deal with the characteristic behavior of boys or girls of the age you are teaching will help you. But let me warn you again, as I did in the preceding study, not to jump to the easy conclusion that the descriptions of pupil characteristics in books are photographs of members of your class. Use your reading as a background for the personal study of your own pupils, and remember that their interests are growing and changing every week

and year. The point I am making here is that you must discover those interests, for they lie at the basis of the selection of your material and your whole process as a teacher.

The value of this approach has been much emphasized by writers in the field of progressive education. If we start with and make full use of pupil interests, we are sure that our boys and girls will enter wholeheartedly into what we are doing together. They will see the importance of the ideas or the skills they are acquiring, for they will recognize that such ideas and skills are needed to enable them to "deal with the problems of their expanding life." If we can make clear that what we are doing has meaning and value for the pupils' life now and not merely in a distant future, we shall be sure of their coöperation. We shall not need to resort to external pressure or artificial stimulation. What we do will be interesting because it is meaningful. For the pupil will have "identified himself" with his task, whether it be the acquiring of knowledge or skill or the pursuit of a project, and in so doing will have bridged the gulf between subject matter and his own personal desires and needs.

But there are also drawbacks and difficulties in this approach. Let no reader think that it is a royal road to easy teaching success. It requires great patience and skill in determining what the interests are and what use to make of them, and good judgment to decide what interests should be developed and what others should be discouraged. It will be easy for the teacher to confuse passing whims with worth-while ambitions. It will be a temptation to allow the lesson

period to drift into an amiable but aimless discussion. It will be easy to miss the opportunity to develop the moral and religious aspects of your pupils' interests, just because they seem to be purely secular. The danger is not that which has sometimes been pointed out by opponents of this progressive theory of education, namely, that we shall fail to give our pupils rigorous discipline through the doing of hard and disagreeable tasks such as life always requires. The danger is that, failing to distinguish between the quality of interests which actually exist, we shall spend our energies in dealing with the more obvious and superficial questions to the neglect of the deeper and more serious matters. For example, you might conclude that your Juniors are concerned only with the physical or the gang-forming activities mentioned a page or two back in this section. You might therefore decide that your job as a Church School teacher is to organize a Junior baseball nine or a club of "Indian Braves." But interests quite as genuine may lie in the field of intellectual curiosity or of heroic moral conduct or in doing some piece of useful service, and these should be your guides and your goal.

But apart from the possibilities and the difficulties inherent in this approach in teaching, the procedure is indispensable. Without it your subject matter is likely to be remote and dull, your teaching a series of hectic attempts to stimulate attention and to enforce discipline, and your net result the shifting of your pupils' attention to whatever interests them "at every let-up of external pressure." You will have

forgotten that your pupil is at the other end of the log.

Why Must We Reckon with Pupil Attitudes or Their "Mental Set"? We are always talking about the attitudes of our pupils and characterizing them as good or bad. What do we mean? We sometimes use the word to describe the posture of the body, as, "His attitude was slouchy," or, "His attitude was reverent." But usually we are thinking of the posture of the mind, the bearing of the personality toward some object or person or line of action. So we say that John's attitude toward his lesson is indifferent or eager; toward his teacher, friendly or hostile; toward some line of activity, coöperative or antagonistic. This posture of the mind or spirit of your pupil may make or break the successful issue of your teaching experience. Your failure to understand and come to grips with your pupils' attitudes may wreck your teaching career.⁴

Probably you have often wondered how these attitudes come to be, and especially why they should be so unlike in different individuals. Their origin lies, of course, in the neural nature, or instincts, of the individual. We are born to respond favorably to certain stimuli and unfavorably to others. Lists have been made of the so-called "original annoyers and satisfiers." We have described those in Study II.⁵ Some of these are common to the majority of us.

⁴**Note.** The International Curriculum Guide will suggest for each age group what attitudes you may expect to find; but you yourself must discover the particular attitudes of the members of your class.

⁵Cf. Powell, Wilfred E., "Growth of Christian Personality," Chapters II and III. The Bethany Press, 1929.

But our attitudes are due also to our environing conditions—our home, school, church, friends, and all the experiences of our lives. For example, one of your pupils, John, may come from a home where parents and children practice the spirit of coöperation and sharing. From his earliest childhood he has been expected to play his part in the game. He has not been pampered or waited upon. His response to any line of action that calls for partnership is favorable and eager. You can count on John's coöperation. Another pupil, James, has always been allowed to have his own way. He has never learned to work with others or to pursue any line of activity to its conclusion. He has formed the habit of doing anything enthusiastically until it involves real work, and then of tossing it aside for something new and untried. He is a difficult pupil to deal with. His attitudes are marked by undependability, inaccuracy, fleeting attention, self-centeredness. Sometimes he seeks and gains attention for himself by "smart" sayings or doings. He is often the center of your problem of discipline.

Pupil attitudes are due also to their experience with the various activities in which they have engaged. If the tasks which they have undertaken have proved too difficult, they have become discouraged; if too easy, they have been bored; if correctly suited to their capacities, they have been successful and enthusiastic. We all tend to respond with favor and zest to whatever we can do well and toward those who treat us with respect and appreciation. But whatever is beyond or beneath our capacities we either

fear or despise, just as we avoid those we dislike, or who, we think, dislike us.

Pupil attitudes are traceable also to their past experiences in the Church School. If the teaching and the material in the departments preceding your own have been interesting and vital, you are likely to have a class which brings a favorable "mental set" toward you and your work. Fortunate teacher, guard that which has been committed to you! On the contrary your pupils' past experiences with the Church School may have bred within them a contempt for its teaching, an indifference to its lessons and activities, and a habit of irreverence toward whatever happens under its auspices. Some Church Schools are marked by such a lack of school spirit and morale that they remind us of the tales of the public schools of our grandfathers' day when bad manners and a contempt for school discipline were common. That spirit has largely disappeared from the public schools. Unfortunately it still persists in many Church Schools. We, therefore, often have to deal with a group attitude or mental set of a class or department that is almost an intrenched tradition—a tradition of no work or careless work, no coöperation, bad manners, low morale.

If a situation like this, or even remotely like this, exists in your class or school, your first task is to search for the cause or causes. The trouble may be traceable to an inadequate building and lack of classrooms; to materials or projects unsuited to your pupils' capacities or lacking in vitality or interest; to poor teaching on your part or on the part of your colleagues; and probably to the fact that the work

of the school both now and in the past has not been vital and meaningful in the lives of your pupils.

It is clear to you, of course, that there is a close connection between interests and attitudes. One is likely to respond eagerly to a situation which interests him. An attitude might be defined as one's emotional reaction to any proposal, challenge, person, or situation with which he is confronted; and one might say that the attitude will be favorable or unfavorable according to whether or not the proposal, challenge, person, or situation is interesting. The teacher who is alert to the importance of attitudes will watch well the interests of his pupils.

If your pupils' attitudes are favorable toward you and your work, be thankful. But be more than thankful. Make the fullest use of their friendly and co-operative spirit by giving them a share in selecting their problems, projects, and materials, and in the planning and conduct of your common work. If, on the contrary, their attitudes are indifferent, unappreciative, uncoöperative and perhaps hostile, search for the causes in them, in the school, and in yourself; endeavor to discover their real interests, even though they seem trivial and secular, and build your work and program around them. That is your first problem. Your second is to increase and enrich the range of their interests. We shall deal further with this problem in Study VI.

The hopeful side of the matter is this: attitudes can be enriched, modified, or completely changed. You can recall that your own attitudes have been greatly altered. Your antipathy toward a disagreeable piece of work changed because you saw that its

successful accomplishment brought you nearer to some coveted goal. Your prejudice toward an alien race melted away because you came to respect and care for a member of that race. We learn to do hard and disagreeable things and find pleasure in doing them because they are useful or essential to our families and friends. The triumph comes when we have brought ourselves or our pupils to do or to meet that which is unavoidable with zest and satisfaction.

What Are Pupil Situations? Much is being written to-day about, and in defense of, the use of pupil situations in progressive education. Many of the newer courses for our Church Schools are being constructed about the problems which are inherent in such pupil situations. The reason for this is clear when we think of the matter in the light of what we have just been saying about interests and attitudes. For by "pupil situations" we mean those experiences in which *our* pupils find themselves placed or involved. Of course they are vital and interesting.

Some pupil situations seem very simple. John is invited to a New Year's Eve party. Shall he stay as long as the others do or come home when his parents think he ought to? Observe that this is a situation which John is actually facing. His interests are involved. He is keen to go to that party. He wants to be with his friends and to do as they do. But there is a conflict of interests, a tension, a problem. John may brush the problem aside by disregarding his parents' wishes or by yielding to them. But what is really involved is not so simple, for John must come to terms with his home, his friends, his social life, his health, and his moral standards.

Now suppose that John's situation is common to the other members of your class. Then to discuss it, to study it, to lift it out of the realm of the temporary and commonplace by enriching it with the spirit of Jesus and of our finest Christian relationships would seem to be a clear "lead" for you as a teacher. You can be reasonably sure, if you follow that lead, that John and his friends will be interested and that their mental set will be eager.

Other situations will seem much more complex. James's father is ill and has been forced to give up his position. The family budget has been repeatedly pared but the savings are rapidly disappearing. James's plans for finishing high school and for going to college are being threatened. His older brother has quit college and has found work as a manual laborer. What ought James to do?

Note that you do not have to make this situation interesting to James or to his friends. It is absorbing. James finds it difficult to think of anything else, and almost impossible to listen to your presentation of, let us say, Elijah and the widow's jar of meal and cruse of oil, I Kings, ch. 17. Here is a real, present-day problem, involving the health, happiness, and solidarity of James's family; his education; his future career; his attitude toward life; and his character, which may be marred by disappointment or enlarged by the challenge. Therefore to discuss this situation or to enlarge and enrich the issue of it by your own experience or by the use of the Elijah story (which under the circumstances might become very helpful and real), or by the heroic examples of other young men (Biblical and extra-Biblical) who have

made sacrifice of their personal hopes for the sake of others, will appeal to an interest that does not need to be aroused. It is there waiting to be utilized. Any material or discussion or reading or project that is relevant to James's situation will not need to be "made interesting." It will *be* interesting.

The teacher's use of pupil situations will be discussed in Study VI and the bearing of the same upon printed materials will be dealt with in Study VII. It is sufficient here to define what we mean by the term, and to point out that real pupil situations, whether they seem to be simple or complex, are warm and living experiences which do not need to be sugar coated in our teaching or made interesting by any artificial devices.

What Kinds of Pupil Situations Should We Use? Two major criticisms may fairly be laid at the door of those who advocate the use of pupil situations. The first is that such a procedure excludes from our curriculum that body of classic history, biography, and poetry (the Bible and other religious literature) which is the prized possession of the race. We shall deal with this criticism in Study VII. The second is that an extreme use of pupil situations leads us to include much that is trivial, transient, and commonplace. With this second criticism we have now to deal.

Let us admit at once that many of the situations in which our pupils find themselves seem trivial to us adults. When the Nursery Class child spills milk on her doll's dress and cries or sulks because the dress is soiled; when the Junior boy receives at Christmas a train of cars which he refuses to share with his

younger brother; when a high school pupil wins his letter in football and "keeps his head," just as if nothing had happened, some of us adults are inclined to think that such situations are purely transient. "How soon they will outgrow such childish sorrows or joys!" we say. To bother about such matters in a Church School session, when one has only a half hour a week to become acquainted with the lives of Jesus, Isaiah, and Paul, seems absurd.

Of course, there are pupil situations *and* pupil situations, and some are much more worth discussing than others. But can we not lay down certain principles for their selection? In a sense all that we do is significant, for the reason that we are involved in what we do and our actions are the expression of our personalities. Our behavior in what seems to be a trivial experience is a reflection of our character and such behavior deepens our habits of responding to what is pleasant or unpleasant in our environment. The Nursery child who cries or sulks when something happens to her doll is developing a disposition that may lead her to go on crying or sulking at every disappointment or thwarted desire. Moreover, all that we do usually involves some one else beside ourselves. Every situation has social significance. The boy who refuses to share his train with his younger brother may continue to be unsocial or uncoöperative as long as he lives.

A pupil situation is far more than an isolated, external happening. It is related to the pupil's own character or habits and to other persons; and it is personal or internal in its quality, for it involves the person's thinking and reflection. The high school

boy who keeps his head after winning an honor does not do so without thinking and willing. His experience, which we call a life situation, includes physical activity, mental activity, purposing, reflection, and always other people.

But while it is true to say that all pupil situations are significant, some are more significant than others, and we do well, in selecting them for treatment or use in our Christian teaching, to ask certain questions about them:

1. *Are Our Pupil Situations Typical?* Will the situation tend to recur in the pupil's life? Will it, or something strangely like it, appear again and again? Is the situation common to the lives of children or young people? There is likelihood that we may use an experience from the life of one of our pupils that the others in the class will not have shared. To deal in class, or in a group, with such a highly personal and untypical experience would mean a loss of interest. Such matters can be dealt with personally. We should therefore ask, "Is this situation typical?" Look again at the Nursery child who cried or sulked when her doll's dress was soiled. All her life—all through our lives—she will face the issue of having some injury happen to her personal property. Her wardrobe, her furniture, her home, her automobile, her real estate or stock or bonds may all have "milk spilled upon them" and be injured or ruined. How will she behave? Will she always cry or sulk, making herself and others wretched? Or will she meet such experiences with a spirit that rises above loss?

2. *Are Our Pupil Situations Problematical?* Is their solution easy or somewhat difficult? Do they require thought? Are there several ways of meeting them and must one pass judgment on these ways? Your Junior boy who refuses to share his train with his brother has a problem on his hands. It needs only to be pointed out to him. The easy solution is apparently to indulge his selfishness and allow him to keep his train for himself. But such a course makes his brother unhappy, spoils the Christmas spirit of the family, and in the end makes him unpopular. The easy solution of this problem is easy indeed, but unsatisfying. To have the problem pointed out, and to help your Junior to see its ramifications and then to solve it in a way which is generous, neighborly, and Christian, is to help him at once to think for himself, to weigh issues and values, and to meet similar situations with a wiser and more gracious spirit.

3. *Are Our Pupil Situations Capable of Spiritual Enrichment and Control?* Most of them are, but they vary in degree at this point. Learning to skate or to play the piano or to read French may be situations which are typical and problematical. They are also situations which can be enriched and controlled; i.e., one can control his practice and enrich his skill until he becomes an accomplished skater or pianist or linguist. But such practices are not so susceptible of *spiritual* enrichment and control as are those situations which include more particularly one's relationship with others or with God. Situations involving friendship, relations with children of another race or stratum in society, the need of world peace, moral

character, prayer, and worship, are capable of spiritual enrichment. We can help our pupils to see what values are wrapped up in their experiences. We can direct them to inquire how deeply spiritual persons met similar experiences, to seek for the sources of their insight and power, and to try to gain such resources for themselves. Clearly some situations, much more than others, lend themselves to spiritual enrichment and control.

4. *Are Our Pupil Situations Capable of Extension or Expansion?* Are they by nature of such quality that they lead on into larger and more meaningful situations? Some experiences seem to exhaust themselves in a short time; others are just the beginnings of a train or series of ever enlarging experiences. I recall a project reported to me by one of my students who was the teacher of a class of junior high school girls. One of their members was in distress. Her father was a heavy drinker; he had been put in jail and had lost his job. The family was in desperate need of clothing and food. The other girls in the class, all in fortunate circumstances, decided to help. They packed a basket of food and clothing and took it to the family. Here was an experience typical, problematical, and susceptible of Christian enrichment. But it was more. At the suggestion of a wise teacher, the members of the class began to think of the issues that were involved in this situation. Were they not all members one of another? Were baskets of clothing and food enough? Were they not just salve upon an open sore? Clearly, the father must be got out of jail, given another job, and helped to make good. The family must be rehabili-

tated. Individual girls took the matter up with their fathers, one an employer of labor and one a judge. The objectives which they had clearly seen were attained. The father, released on probation, went to work and provided for his family. Then the project developed into a study of working conditions, jails, intemperance, prohibition, et cetera. Much reading, visitation, and discussion took place. Knowledge increased, understanding was enlarged, sympathy quickened, outlets of expression were found. Here was a situation that expanded as the girls explored it.

Finally, it is possible and often necessary to create or induce pupil situations. The teacher need not wait for them to arise; he ought not always to wait. He realizes that his pupils need some experiences which they are not likely to have if left to their own undirected choices, and that the teaching possibilities in such experiences will therefore never mature.

Many years ago I was leading a group of young people in a suburb of New York. They came from homes of culture, many of them from homes of considerable wealth. I believed that they needed to know "how the other half lives." So I deliberately launched a project which involved a trip to Ellis Island and led to a study of the immigration population in the country and the community. I plunged them into a situation which was over their heads.

Of course, when we induce pupil situations, we must be careful that they are natural and inherently interesting, and that they can readily become pupil situations and not just teacher-imposed situations.

If as a teacher you bear these principles in mind, you will save yourself from that shallow type of

teaching which is rightly condemned by the critics of the pupil-situation approach. It is not necessary to permit your pupils to babble about the superficial things that "lie at the top of their heads." That is too easy to be called good teaching. You must dig more deeply and explore more widely until you find situations significant enough to be worthy of use. In so doing you need not forget your pupils' interests. You must remember that they are sitting "on the other end of the log."

Summary. I have been urging in this study that we solve the problem of interest by doing things with our pupils which are inherently interesting; that we cannot succeed if we do not reckon with our pupils' attitudes; that pupil situations are those experiences in which *our* pupils are engaged; and that we should select, and sometimes induce, situations which are significant.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL STUDY AND THOUGHT

1. How have you tried to make your teaching interesting? How does your idea of interest compare with Professor Dewey's?

2. How much exact knowledge concerning your pupils do you possess: e.g., concerning their habits of work and study, their use of leisure time, their attitudes toward their parents and teachers and friends, their fears and hopes, their likes and dislikes?

3. How would you proceed to gather such information?

4. Considering the manner by which your pupils' attitudes are formed and the strength of such attitudes (and mental set), to what extent and in what ways should you reckon with them in your teaching?

5. Make a list (for your own use only) of certain vital situations in which you are sure your pupils are engaged. Are they typical, problematical, and capable of Christian enrichment and extension? Which of these situations should be used, and why?

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STUDY VI

THE FUNCTION OF THE TEACHER IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Thus far we have been thinking largely of the pupil. We have been saying that it is for his sake that we are teachers. Otherwise we should go out of business. But in this study we teachers are to think of ourselves.

We want to be more effective teachers. We have a craftsman's pride in our job. We want the satisfaction of seeing our work take on substantial form before our eyes. When we are told that we are sowers only and that we ought not to be concerned with the harvest, we reply that we are as human as farmers and gardeners. We, too, are looking for the blade, the ear, and the full corn in the ear. Besides, we crave more joy in our teaching. We have lived long enough to know that there is little pleasure in doing anything badly. We are increasingly aware that there is little satisfaction in teaching badly.

But how can we improve our skill? We admit that we should have worthy aims and we have set them up as targets. But how can we hit the targets or achieve the goals? We agree that we should know our pupils, that we should discover their needs and problems and enter imaginatively into the situations in which they are vitally engaged. But what are we going to do with these needs and situations after we have discovered them?

Did you ever teach a young boy to swim? Probably you did not call yourself a teacher or think of him as a pupil. You knew him and liked him and he liked you. He was a well-built lad, strong and active. He loved the water and was fond of paddling about in it. But he couldn't swim. "Too bad," you said to yourself; "he would enjoy it so much." You were an expert swimmer. The boy admired you and coveted your skill. You became fast friends. Sometimes you would play with him in the shallow water and lead him

a little farther from shore. You didn't scare him or make fun of him. You showed him how you swam, got him to try, pointed out his mistakes, showed him his good points, kept him swimming. You knew he would learn. He wanted to. Besides, the water was there and so were you. Do you see?

If you don't see the application of this illustration, perhaps we should get at the problems of this study without further delay. They are as follows: How can the teacher make use of his pupils' interests? How can the teacher determine what pupil situations to employ? Must the teacher wait for situations to arise or may he initiate them? How can a teacher and his pupils work together? How can one become a more efficient teacher?

How Can the Teacher Make Use of His Pupils' Interests? When the teacher attempts to put progressive theories into practice he discovers that his way is not easy or his path clear. What looked so simple in the training class becomes complex and baffling when he is left alone with his pupils. There they are, alive and restless and usually "unprepared." They are talking about everything under the sun except the lesson. The teacher looks confused. Visions of creative teaching, ultimate aims, pupil problems, arrange themselves in fantastic combinations in his brain. They are like the strange shapes and colors of dreamland, from which one has been rudely awakened. One cannot get hold of them and bring them to earth. Here are flesh-and-blood boys and girls. A few moments of hesitation will precipitate a problem of discipline. The teacher picks up the Quarterly and begins to read the questions for the day. When a person is confused, isn't it better to fall back upon the habits of a lifetime than to try experiments that will probably fail?

What are life situations in a pinch like this, when courage and ingenuity have oozed out?

Of course, falling back upon the questions in the Quarterly doesn't solve your problem. If it did, why should you so often ask questions like these: "How can I solve the problem of discipline? How can I make the session vital?" But there is only one way to solve the problem of discipline. That is to make your session so engrossing that your pupils will attend to it and not to outside distractions. The only way to make a lesson vital is to choose subjects that *are* vital, that deal with matters of genuine concern to your pupils. Some lessons can never be made vital, even by the most skillful teacher. They do not have the essence of vitality in them. It is because these are real problems in the teacher's work that our attention is directed to pupil interests and situations.

It must be remembered, however, that pupil interests and situations are not to be confined to or confused with physical activity situations. A life situation may involve physical activity, as when in a burst of temper one pupil hits another. But life situations occur also as problems in the mind. They may not be physically experienced at all. For example, the problem which you are now facing of becoming a more effective teacher is not physical. You are becoming aware that you are not doing your job very well, that teaching a lesson in the traditional way is not improving your pupils' characters. You don't know quite what to do or where to begin. You are struggling to get hold of something tangible and workable. This is a problem in your mind. You can't go on

as you are. You must either improve your teaching or quit. It is a life situation for you.

Consider how you would feel if in your training class some one tried to arouse your enthusiasm for a subject which was entirely foreign to your interest—for example, the exploits of Cæsar in Gaul, the geography of Babylonia, or even the journeys of Paul. Being an adult, and a polite adult, you might give the appearance of being an interested listener. But your mind would not be on Cæsar or Babylonia or Paul; it would be set upon that everlasting problem of yours—how to become a better teacher. “This training class,” you would probably be saying to yourself, “ought to help me to master my problem and myself. It ought not to be so remote from my life situation.”

Now reverse the matter, and imagine yourself the teacher and a class your pupils. Don't you suppose that they have interests as vital as yours and life situations as real as yours? Your task as a teacher is not to force down their throats something which you think they ought to take, but to help them to analyze their difficulties. Your purpose is to start with them where they are and help them to emerge at the place where they ought to be.

Professor Coe has put the issue so clearly in his “What Is Christian Education?”¹ that we ought to have the substance of his position before us at this point. He reminds us that we teachers should explain the situation in the midst of which the pupil is living, interpret its meaning for him, indicate the diffi-

¹ Coe, George A., “What Is Christian Education?” pp. 191, 192. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929.

culties which he is facing in its solution, point out the mistakes he is making in his endeavor to master the problem, and share with him "the sort of help that he needs in order to change his situation and himself in a desirable manner. What the teacher does," continues Professor Coe, "amounts to inserting into the 'life situation' something that seems likely to improve it through the pupil's own acts. The teacher, acting as an experienced friend, may point out something already there in the situation that the pupil had not noticed; show how others in similar situations have acted, and what the results were; or strengthen one desire as against another by holding attention to it or by subjecting it to some social judgment. Material or content (by which is meant ideas already in the minds of the elders) is now thought of, not as something to be 'gotten over' at all costs, but as a source of possible help, to be used or not as occasion seems to require.

"Here the mind of the teacher goes through three stages: (a) Ascertainment of points at which help is needed in specific 'life situations' of pupils. (b) Search within our mature experience for something that is likely to help. (c) In the light of our knowledge of the pupil, devising a technique whereby he shall freely appropriate the help that we bring him.

"The mind of the pupil runs through three corresponding stages: (a) I am dissatisfied with this or that in my present experience. (b) Hello! here's something that has to do with experiences like mine. Let's see what it is. It appears to indicate a reasonable way to get along. I'll try it. (c) This new way

of getting along is better than the old way. I'm going to keep it up."

How Can the Teacher Determine What Pupil Situations to Employ? If you have decided that in order to become an effective teacher you must deal directly with your pupils' concerns, you soon find yourself asking, "What concerns?" For they will be many and varied. If your pupils are alert, ingenious, and imaginative, they are engaged in a wide diversity of activities and their minds are exploring many problems. Not all of them can be handled at once. Not all deserve to be. For while it is true that Christian education touches all the issues of our daily life, still some of these issues are of more consequence than others and should be given right of way.

In the final section of the preceding study (please review at this point) attention was called to four criteria by which pupil situations should be selected: Are the situations typical? Are they problematical? Are they capable of spiritual enrichment and control? Are they capable of extension or expansion? These criteria are quite as significant for the teacher as they are for the pupil.

One point that cannot be made too explicit is that pupil situations should be vital to the pupils themselves. Too often we have treated the child as an adult in miniature and have thought that he should be interested in the problems that we find absorbing. Sometimes we have taken the situations that have been "written up" in so-called pupil-centered courses and have tried to force them upon our classes. We are likely to fail in either attempt. What is vital

to us, or even what has been vital to a group of similarly aged pupils living in other circumstances, may not be real and meaningful to the boys or girls in your class.

We do well to remember also that there are two types of situations which are vital to pupils of all ages. There are the first-hand experiences with life which the pupil himself is having. They may include everything from brushing his hair to doing a good turn every day. They may be individual or social. They are his own experiences with himself, his parents, his playmates, his community, his school, his church, his natural world, his God. But they are always his own and not another's. They should be discovered by the teacher and incorporated in his teaching.

But there is another type of situation which is equally genuine. It is sometimes called "vicarious." It is not the pupil's own experience, but rather his imaginative sharing in the life of another. When a boy reads the story of Byrd's expedition to the South Pole, and is thrilled by its adventures as reported from day to day in the papers, he is, of course, not actually making the journey with Byrd. Yet he is with him in imagination. He is adventuring with him "vicariously," and his experience is just as genuine a life situation as is playing baseball in the school yard. The teacher needs to help his pupils to think intelligently and to face the facts honestly. They cannot make right choices unless they do think honestly. Such thinking should be stimulated in connection not only with actual first-hand experiences but also with the vicarious situations just described.

Finally, in determining life situations, the teacher should help his pupils to select those which offer the opportunity for the largest amount of shared purposing. The point is sometimes referred to as "pupil socialization." This aim is usually best achieved where the atmosphere of the class is informal, where pupils feel free to speak their minds and to differ from one another, where the teacher does not arbitrarily impose his thought upon the group but acts as guide and coach, and where pupils and teacher together constitute a working team. Sometimes the group, if it is large, can be divided into two or more sections, with specific pieces of work allotted to each section. Some members may be asked to gather information, others to perfect themselves in skills, and others to carry on the task of administering the activity. Then the entire group passes judgment on what has thus been done and puts the several parts together into a composite product.

One of the best examples of shared purposing is the decision of your class or group, under your coaching, to send a box of toys, books, and clothing to a mission school or station. The group makes itself familiar with the needs of the mission; by means of letters and photographs it tries to visualize those needs. Some members of the group collect articles for the box or earn money to buy new articles. Other members become responsible for putting the used articles in repair. The secretary of the class composes a letter from the group to the head of the mission, and a committee makes arrangements for shipping the box and prepaying the shipping costs. After the box has gone, the entire undertaking is reviewed and

criticized. The total result is "pupil socialization." Each member has done his bit and the group as a whole has learned to work together.

Must the Teacher Wait for Situations to Arise or May He Initiate Them? It is sometimes supposed that if the life-situation approach is used in place of the older subject-matter type of teaching the teacher must abdicate and be a silent spectator to an enterprise which the pupils themselves manage. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

It is, of course, true that the teacher's position is different from that in the older forms of teaching. There the teacher selected the Quarterly or textbook; made the assignment; controlled the classroom responses by his own lecture, questions, or comments; and endeavored by these means to transfer the contents of the lesson, plus his own experience, into the minds and memories of his pupils. As such, his rôle was often that of an autocrat or dictator. To secure the results which he desired he made use of endless drill and repetition and insisted upon the mastery and memorization of bodies of knowledge. He was at the center of the teaching-learning process. The pupils were satellites sitting about their central, light-giving sun.

With the life-situation approach the relationship is changed, and the imagery as well. The teacher begins with some interest or problem which he has helped his pupils to discover or which they have discovered for themselves. By a skillful direction of the conversation the teacher pushes his pupils to examine the more complex aspects of the problem under contemplation. Quite likely they have seen

only the superficial phases of the matter. They have explored it only so far as their experience enabled them to do so. The teacher does not sit helplessly by while the class engages in aimless small talk. He makes comments, suggests bits of experience, tells a story, draws out some pupil's statement. He is a member of the group, not its dictator. But he is not an absentee member. If his approach is pupil-centered, and he is with his pupils where they are, then he is at the center of the process. Or, more correctly, both the teacher and the pupils are at the center. Of course, he is not on a rostrum, lecturing to his pupils. He is in their midst as one who serves.

Let us suppose, in the first contacts with his class, he begins with some situation which is of interest to all of them. Very soon that situation begins to expand. It extends with many ramifications into various fields of experience and knowledge. If the situation is discussed solely on the pupil's level of intelligence and experience it soon ceases to be interesting. It exhausts itself and becomes a bore. But the wise teacher directs the thought of the group into deeper channels and expands the range of their interest. He begins where they are, but he doesn't allow them to remain there long. Note what the teacher has done. He has so expanded the situation that it really becomes a new situation, built about the core of the original situation. This is a natural evolution of the process which we are considering.

Moreover, the wise teacher must not wait for occasions to arise, nor trust to chance suggestions which, like the winds, blow where they will. He must feel free to make suggestions, as was indicated in the

preceding study. He must lead his pupils into problems which they would not discover for themselves and into situations not of their own choosing. He must not sit idly by, waiting for things to turn up. This does not mean that he will be a dictator or a purveyor of solutions. Nor does it mean that he will thrust his pupils into deep water which is over their heads. But he will always be pushing them into expanding situations and stabbing their minds with thought-provoking questions: "Now that we are here, what are we going to do about it? This is a hard problem to solve; what do you make of it?"

To quote from Professor Coe again: "If we are to deal educationally with the whole actuality of pupil situations, we must produce dissatisfactions that do not spontaneously arise; we must accept the responsibility of introducing new strains and difficulties into the learner's experience; we must cause him to wrestle with problems that without our help he might not dream of. Not otherwise can the rising generation be helped to rise above the conventional goodness and the conventional compromises with goodness that characterize the older generation."²

How Can a Teacher and His Pupils Work Together? Let us remember that our major aim in dealing with a pupil is the growth of his Christian personality. Our question then might read, "How can a teacher and his pupils work together to initiate and carry on such activities as will make for the utmost growth of Christian personality?"

We have already said that there is no growth apart from the activity of the growing person. Your pupil

² Coe, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

must be capable of growth, as all normal persons are. He must then be placed in contact with those forces or factors outside of himself which, like food and fresh air, can be assimilated by his growing personality. He must be furnished stimulating adventure, knowledge, and the companionship of men and women of real parts. He must actually partake of this environment, as he partakes of his food. No one can eat for him and no one can appropriate these stimulating factors in the environment for him.

It is clear, therefore, that there is a limit to what parents and teachers can do for their children. They cannot eat for them, breathe or sleep for them, swim or climb for them. No more can they read, think, act, pray, or worship for them. Every child must "bear his own burden."

On the other hand, every child needs guidance and comradeship. It would be folly to leave him to his own devices. If he had to learn everything that he can know without the aid of the experience of the race and of those cultural forces of home, school, church, and society, he would probably advance but little beyond the stage of his barbarian forbears. That is why we have schools and teachers.

A teacher once asked me, "How can I help John [a Junior] to become a Christian person?" I said: (a) "Be a growing Christian person yourself, who thinks, talks, acts, and lives as a Christian and whose life is attractive to John." (b) "Cultivate a friendship with John so that he finds you and the kind of life you are living appealing; and then invite him to do things with you." (c) "Stimulate him to learn more about the Christian life and help him to under-

stand the spirit of Jesus and other exemplars of Christian living; help him to be critical of himself and to pass judgment on his mistakes; keep on living with him as a Christian in every situation that arises and practice the ideals you talk about. There is no other way."

Again and again I have had teachers put to me this question: "How can I help my class to understand the Christian way of living?" And again I have said to them: (a) "Remember that this also is a matter of growth, and that we grow in understanding by trying to understand." (b) "Observe also that the Christian way of living must be made concrete and attractive in persons." (c) "Give the members of your class an acquaintance with the Christian way of living, and an opportunity to try it out and to see what it is like." (d) "Suggest that sometimes they get in touch with wrong or unchristian ways of living as depicted in books, on the screen, in plays, in the newspapers, or in the lives of persons they know, and discuss with them the results in terms of character, influence, and happiness." (e) "Introduce the members of your class to those whose standards of Christian living are high—contemporaries in their own community or those whose life work they come in touch with through the reading of biography, for example, Grenfell, Kagawa, Schweitzer, as well as the characters of our sacred Scriptures." (f) "Help them to imagine themselves in various concrete situations which are likely to lie in the path of any of us. Help them to dramatize these situations and visualize themselves in them. Ask them what they ought to do and how they

ought to behave as Christians. Have them make a dramatic rehearsal not only of their Christian behavior but also of its consequences to them and to others involved. It is altogether likely that such visualization will promote their growth in Christian character."

Observe the teacher's place in this process of working with his pupils. He establishes with them a friendly relation of love and confidence. He sets the group on fire with the contagion of his own enthusiasm for exploration, or fact-finding, or the doing of something worth while. He brings out the most that each learner knows and encourages him to express it in words or deeds. He adds new facts to the data which his pupils possess, sharpens their thinking, helps them to decide what is relevant to the problem under consideration, and suggests where the judgments of the group are made without sufficient supporting data. The teacher assists in carrying out the activity, of whatever sort it is, and stimulates the group to keep at it until it is done. The teacher helps his pupils to be critical of what they are doing. He respects their interests, ideas, and ideals. He shows them how to work together and how to adjust themselves to one another's abilities and peculiarities. He shows them how their several talents may be used to supplement one another. And throughout the process the teacher remains as he began, a coach, a counselor, a confidant, and a friend.

How Can One Become a More Efficient Teacher? To be sure, this is the question which this entire book is endeavoring to help you to answer. Yet it should be dealt with specifically at this point.

It is a question which Church School teachers are always asking. The fact that they are concerned to be better teachers is most hopeful, for the first step on the road to success in any kind of activity is the step of desire. Years ago I came across a sentence in a book, whose author and title I have completely forgotten: "You can have what you want if you want it enough, but you can't control the price you pay for it." I believe this holds true of the Christian teacher. He can become much more efficient than he is, if he is willing to pay the price.

The next step is to try to discover what an efficient teacher is, what goes into his list of qualifications. A method which I have often used and advised is as follows: Think of the teachers whom you have known or under whom you have studied in public or private school, in Church School, in college, or elsewhere. Be sure that you are thinking concretely of actual individuals. You will probably recall one teacher who had strong *personal charm*. He was gracious, genuine, likable, tactful. He met you easily and put you at ease. There was nothing "high-hat" or pretentious about him.

You recall another teacher who was *friendly*. He was unselfish, genuine, took a deep interest in you. He had time for you. What concerned you mattered. You were more important than the lesson.

You recall another teacher who had *real religion*. You felt that religion—faith, prayer, Christian discipleship, the Church—meant a great deal to him. He had Christian convictions and stood by them. He always seemed to you to be practicing what he taught.

You saw the Master in his character, his speech, his manner, his spirit.

You recall another teacher who *knew his subject*. He knew what he was teaching each time he met his class, but he knew a lot besides. He was able to answer your questions with answers that could be supported by facts. When he did not know the facts he said so, and proceeded to find them. He did not come to class unprepared.

You recall another teacher who *knew you*. He knew your ideas, your problems, your interests. He built his plans around your interests. He was very considerate of your opinions, even of your immature opinions. He encouraged you to express them. But he was also aware of your needs and helped you to discover and admit them. He knew you and the other members of the class likewise.

You recall another teacher who *knew how to teach*. He knew how to assign material and to make the assignment interesting. He knew how to plan a lesson and make the half hour worth while. He knew how to ask a question and to tell a story that belonged in the spot where he introduced it. He could show you how to study, how to think, and how to gather material.

You recall another teacher who was *frank and fair*. He never bluffed you or bullied you. He never got sarcastic. He never made fun of you. When you tried to get smart or when you did irritable things in class to distract the attention of others, he never lost his temper or his poise.

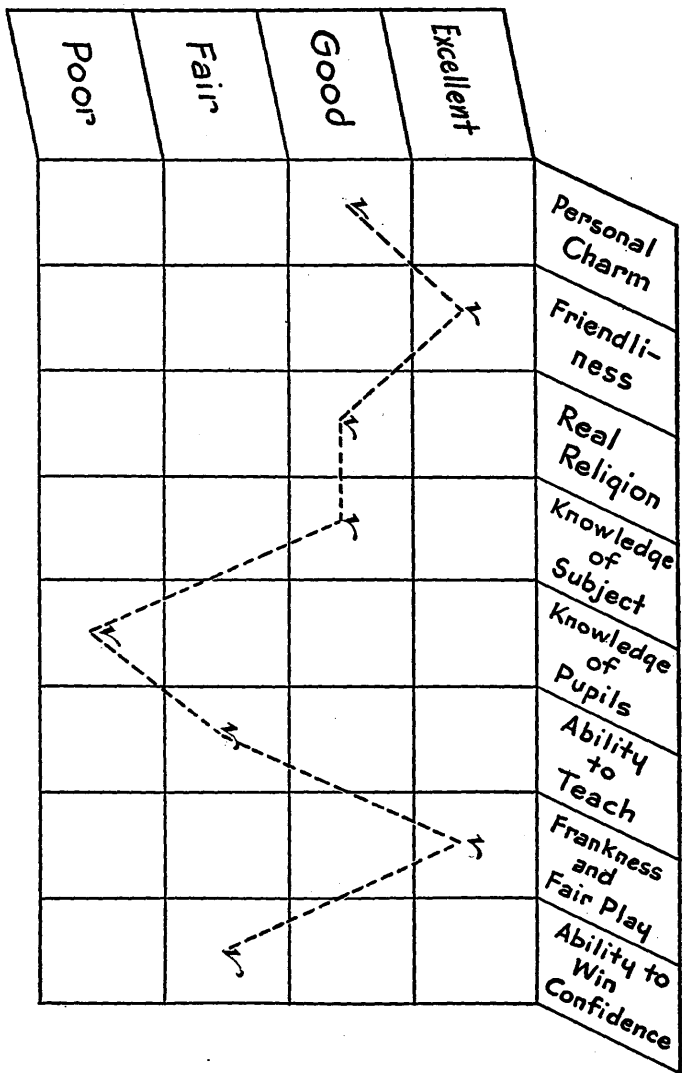
You recall another teacher who *won your confidence*. You trusted him. You knew you could tell

him anything and he would treasure your secrets. Your life and its inmost aspirations or shortcomings were safe in his keeping.

I have set down a number of short descriptions. They are intended to be suggestive only. What I am hoping you will do is to write out a similar description of the outstanding teachers you have known, some of whom you will remember because they possessed one quality and others because they possessed a different quality.

Then, having made these character portraits, your next step is to compare yourself with them. Make a sketch like that on page 138, putting at the head of each column a key word which will suggest some quality which you have recalled, or, if you like, some teacher you remember. At the side of the sketch write the words "Excellent," "Good," "Fair," "Poor." Then think of yourself in relation to each of these qualities. Put a point in the column to indicate whether you believe yourself to be excellent, good, fair, or poor. When you connect the points with a line, you have a picture, or graph, of yourself. It is your estimate of yourself. In this process be as honest as you know how to be. Don't overrate yourself or underrate yourself. It is your own sketch. Nobody will see it.

You have now taken three steps, which may be called desire, knowledge, and self-judgment. A fourth step remains. Try to improve yourself at the points where the sketch shows you to be poor or fair. If your religious life is poor and shallow, that is probably the reason for your ineffective teaching. Most of us are empty at this point where we ought



to be full. Perhaps you are failing because you do not know your pupils or do not know how to teach. Perhaps this book or others like it will help you. First, know yourself. Diagnose your need. Then, if you do not know how to prescribe for your need, consult your minister or leader or some teacher who seems to have the quality which you lack.

“The common problem, yours, mine, every one’s,
Is—not to fancy what were fair in life
Provided it could be,—but, finding first
What may be, then find how to make it fair
Up to our means: a very different thing!”³

Summary. In this study I have suggested that the Christian teacher must choose or devise lessons which are of vital interest to his pupils; must serve as their guide or coach in an enterprise of shared planning and achievement; must stimulate his pupils to find deeper and more spiritual meanings in their experiences; and must endeavor by means best suited to his particular needs to make himself a more Christian person and a more intelligent, capable, and inspiring leader.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL STUDY AND THOUGHT

1. Write a paragraph on the topic “Why I Desire to Become a More Effective Teacher.”
2. In what ways could you make a more significant use of your pupils’ interests?
3. Which types of situations do you regard as most vital in your teaching: your pupils’ first-hand experiences with life or their vicarious experiences?
4. Make a list of situations which you would like to have occur in your class. How could you and your pupils initiate them together?

³ Browning, Robert, “Bishop Blougram’s Apology.”

5. Make the sketch referred to in the closing section of the study. Honestly try to diagnose your case and then draw up a prescription for yourself.

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STUDY VII

THE USE OF MATERIALS IN CHRISTIAN TEACHING

Many Church School teachers are perplexed by another problem. They feel obliged to use the Quarterlies or texts which have been provided for them. Yet teaching "creatively" seems to imply teaching without textbooks; and the use of texts seems to connote transmissive teaching. Shall the teacher, therefore, abandon all printed materials, the Bible included, for the sake of a progressive ideal; or shall he surrender the ideal and transmit whatever material his superintendent or director has asked him to use?

Perhaps you have found yourself thus confused. Your school is using the Improved Uniform Lessons or one of the graded series. Your pupils have had Bibles presented to them by the church. Their parents are sending them to the Church School for instruction in the Bible. They frequently complain that the modern courses contain too little Biblical material. You realize that if your pupils do not study the Bible under your direction, they may grow up in abysmal ignorance of its contents. What are you to do?

Moreover, although you appreciate the value of pupil-centered teaching, you hesitate to cut yourself loose from the Quarterly or textbook system. You have been anchored to it for a long time. It has supplied the data for your teaching. Its ready-made questions, answers, and methods have spared you the trouble of lesson-planning. You are afraid to abandon so tried and trusty a friend. What would you do if your pupils had no problem to discuss, no life situation that they felt was important? You might want to "follow their lead," but suppose there were no "lead"? Creative teaching does not emerge in a vacuum. Would it not be better to have the faithful Quarterly or Bible close at hand? Here is a dilemma: progressive teaching without textbooks, or textbooks and

transmissive teaching? It is easy to see why an inexperienced teacher would choose the latter.

We shall approach the problem by asking the following questions: Shall we use printed materials or living situations? What is meant by "primary" and "secondary" source materials? How can secondary source materials be made alive? Shall we use the Bible in Christian teaching? Shall we still use textbooks?

Shall We Use Printed Materials or Living Situations? Once more we must define our terms. By printed materials we mean any kind of subject matter that has been reduced to words, set in type, and now appears in the form of leaflet, pamphlet, or book. A Quarterly is printed material. The Bible is printed material. Printed material may be as fresh as the morning's newspaper; it may be as old as the record of Abraham's pilgrimage to Canaan.

Living situations, on the other hand, are still in progress. They are too much with us to be enshrined in records. They change from day to day. Comments about them and descriptions of their progress may appear in the daily press, if the situations themselves are of sufficient general interest. A political campaign or a community chest drive will be reported in the morning and evening papers. But the more intimate and less dramatic happenings of our lives are never thus recorded. They never become a story frozen into printed words. They are living experiences, held only in the memory of those who share in them or tell them.

The difference, on a world-wide scale, between printed materials and living situations was strikingly apparent during the Great War. We were in the throes of a living and kaleidoscopic combat, which

changed its character from month to month and often overnight. Ships were sinking, villages were burning, fertile fields were torn with shells, and men were living like rats in vermin-infested dugouts or were going over the top to have their bodies shattered by shrapnel. It was a living hell in which we all were enmeshed and the frightful tragedy of it could not at the time be put into permanent printed form.

The story of the Revolutionary War, however, was not a living issue in 1914-1918. It was enshrined in the great histories of our country. It was available for any who cared to read it. The events which led up to it and the consequences which followed it had happened so long ago that one had only a historian's interest in them. A few no doubt—outside the schools—read their American histories and some saw strange parallels between the earlier war and the Great War. But the majority of mankind were caught in the maelstrom of a living combat.

Nothing so spectacular as a war is gripping our lives as I write these words. Nevertheless millions of our citizens are suffering from unemployment and fear of economic want, are crying out for bread and clothing in a land of plenty, and are watching with anxiety our united activities for social amelioration and national recovery.

The present is always with us and the future is filled with uncertainty. We cannot escape the necessity of dealing with both in our teaching. The living situation and the future situation that has not yet come to life are always the concern of our pupils and ourselves. Must we not make such the starting point and center of our teaching? Is this not where

interest lies? But if we continue to focus our attention here, are not the lessons of the past, treasured within the printed page, likely to be lost to us? Must we choose the one and forego the other? Which, in the long run, will be the more valuable for our total purpose? Even if the present living situation is more intriguing for ourselves and our pupils, does it not need to be illuminated by past experience? And does not the printed page need to "come alive" again in our present experience? Is it a question or "either . . . or"? Must we not use both?

What Is Meant by "Primary" and "Secondary" Source Materials? Here are two other terms which have been used to distinguish the printed record from living situations. "Primary" materials are the first-hand personal experiences of those who discuss or record them. They may be simple or complex—as simple as arranging the chairs with your Beginners group or as complex as the project which your adolescents are carrying on for the promotion of international good will. The point is that these living, fluid situations, which you use as materials in your teaching, are primary not only because they are of primary interest to the persons engaging in them, but because they belong to their own experience. They are first-hand contacts with one's fellow men, with the material world, and with God. They are not materials that one receives by hearsay. They are not the records of some other man's experience. They are yours or mine, as the case may be; and they have the virtue of being alive and real.

"Secondary" materials are the experiences of others. Sometimes they are recorded in biography

or history or poetry and made available for us in articles or books. Sometimes they are reported by word of mouth in conversation, testimony, or public address. The point is that they are not one's own experiences; they are some one else's experiences. That is what we mean when we call them secondary.

To be sure, they were primary sources for the person having the experiences. To him they were just as alive and real as any personal experience of your own. But when that experience was finished and the person involved told it to his friend or wrote it in a letter or a book, it became a bit of secondary material for all who thereafter heard or read it. I have spoken of these two types of material as sources. I mean that both are available for our use. We may draw freely upon them in our teaching.

Each type of source material has its values and limitations. Primary materials have the virtue of being intensely real. They are objects of attention, interest, and often of concern. But they are likely to be ephemeral and lacking in significance and perspective. The loss by your junior pupil of a much prized baseball is far more real to him than the loss to the Jews of their beloved Temple. The failure of your adolescent boy to make a much-coveted fraternity is a far greater tragedy to him than the martyrdom of Stephen. But such experiences in childhood or youth are likely to be transient and they will some day be seen to be relatively insignificant. On the other hand, secondary source materials may furnish us with the authentic report of events of major importance. They may be recorded in documents of great literary charm. They are usually the

records of extraordinary persons and momentous occasions—as, for example, the career of Moses and the crucifixion of Jesus. Yet to the child or young person, engrossed with his own affairs, such secondary materials may seem remote and unreal. This brings us to our next question.

How Can Secondary Source Materials Be Made Alive? If they are of such value in the education of our pupils, is there any way by which we can make them real? We must remember how real such recorded experiences were to those who first had them. For example, if you are presenting an incident from the life of Livingstone, you may be sure that the circumstances which led him to Africa were living, throbbing experiences. Very well, make them live! If you are teaching your pupils a beautiful hymn, recall the circumstances in the author's life which made him write it. You see, we must push our way back through the story or the poem or the biography or the historical record to the living men and women whose actual experiences have been enshrined there. Who were they? How did they look and feel? What were their motives? Why did they behave as they did?

Perhaps this point can best be illustrated by reference to certain Biblical material with which we are all familiar. For example, when the child Samuel was startled in the night by what he believed to be the cry of his aged friend Eli, and when, at Eli's suggestion, he waited for the cry to be repeated that he might say, "Speak; for thy servant heareth," Samuel was having a real and first-hand experience. There was nothing remote or secondary about it for

him. It changed him almost overnight from a little boy to a thoughtful and courageous youth, for he was charged to clear up an ugly situation in Eli's household which the old man had been powerless to correct. Later on, the incident was told and written down by some ancient scribe. And now it is embedded in the First Book of Samuel (I Sam., ch. 3). How can you make that story from the long ago "come alive"?

You can reconstruct the situation out of which the story came. You can familiarize yourself with the life at the shrine in Shiloh, with the characters of Eli and his sons and the child Samuel. You can permit your imagination to play about the visits of Hannah, who every year brought her little son a new robe. Picture the friendship that grew up between old Eli and the boy. Find out what his duties were and the manner of his life.

Then, having reconstructed the background of the familiar story, try to see through it and ask what happened. You may come to the conclusion, as many persons have, that God spoke in an audible voice to little Samuel, and that the lad had one of those extraordinary revelations which most people nowadays never expect to meet in real life. Or you may conclude that something like the following happened: Samuel had watched the ugly goings on in the sanctuary and was perplexed by happenings which he could not understand. They troubled him and he could not sleep. So, when in the night, he thought he heard Eli calling, he ran to him and Eli told him to go back to his bed and listen. He did as he was told. He was an obedient boy and a re-

ligious boy. He believed in God and he believed in prayer. He believed that he could talk to God and that God would talk to him. He knew that the affairs in the Temple concerned God more than they did him. It was God's house. And there in the night God's Spirit made clear to Samuel's listening and sensitive spirit the meaning of what was happening in the Temple and his own duty in the matter. In the mood of silence and prayer and faith Samuel felt God's presence and discerned God's will. When this old story is reinterpreted in the light of our experience in prayer (though we ought always to be careful not to limit the religious experience of others by our own) the old Samuel-Eli incident comes alive.

Again, we must bring out the human elements in these secondary source materials. We need, to take another example from the Bible, to remember that the men and women of the Bible were human beings, like ourselves. Picture them, therefore, as they were. You do not need to portray them as better than they were. Our fathers seemed to feel that they must whitewash certain Old Testament characters and make saints of them. This was quite unnecessary and essentially untrue to the facts. Neither do we need to portray them as worse than they were. That has been the habit in recent times of certain clever historians of the "debunking" type. Describe them as the Bible describes them, with all their human qualities. Describe the food they ate, the clothing they wore, the houses or tents they lived in, their flocks and fields, the contour of their country, with its hills and valleys and trees. Point out, also, the very human qualities they possessed—their hopes and

fears and joys and sorrows. David was as happy with his sling shot as any modern boy with an air rifle; and his grief over the death of his son Absalom is as heartbreaking as the grief of any modern father who has just received a telegram telling him that his oldest son has been killed in an automobile accident. As a teacher you must try to get beneath the old printed stories to the living men and women whose human experiences are recorded there.

Perhaps some reader of these words will remember the old family albums of our New England homes. When I was a boy and visited my maiden aunts, I was usually entertained with their family albums. There were my ancestors and relatives, looking at me! The men had whiskers and the women wore bonnets. Their clothes were prim and their faces stern. I scarcely thought of them as human until one day my grandmother began telling me about the very modern escapades of her Uncle Ebenezer. Then the old family album came alive! I often think of the Old Testament as the family album of the human race. For when one gets beneath the whiskers and the bonnets, he finds it to be a moving, kaleidoscopic picture of the human race.

Again, one must constantly try to relate the secondary materials to present-day experiences. If this is not possible, then we may use such experiences as are relatively near the present in point of time and interest. It is not always necessary to "apply" an ancient story to the lives of our pupils. But it is necessary to bring out its persistent and ever-recurring values.

For example, Jacob's jealousy and greed, his quar-

rel with his brother, and all that subsequently happened during the years in which they were estranged are neither new nor old (Gen., chs. 27 ff.). They are timeless experiences. They might happen in the life of any man or in any community. You can illustrate them again and again from history, biography, and modern newspaper stories. What happens in so many lives and in so many families—what is happening to-day in so many of our misgoverned and despoiled American cities—is the same kind of thing that happened in the lives of Jacob and Esau. Whatever has persistent value in the Bible is of value to us to-day—and can be illustrated by our life to-day. The pioneering courage of Abraham, the statesman-like leadership of Moses, the devotional aspiration of the psalmist, the prophets' passion for social justice, Nehemiah's national recovery program, Jonah's faith that the love of God is broader than national boundaries or prejudice, the moral might and spiritual passion which were blended in the radiant life of Jesus, Paul's limitless vision of a world brought under the sway of Christ, the conviction of the author of the Revelation that despite the chaos of every age of confusion Almighty God is still upon his throne—all these have their counterparts in our own age.

Shall We Use the Bible in Christian Teaching? This question would have sounded foreign to our fathers' ears, for until the beginning of the present century, nothing except the Bible (or the catechism and related illustrative materials) had found its way into our Church School curriculums. The situation has greatly changed, as anyone may

discover who takes the trouble to examine the total output of Quarterlies, lesson helps, and texts issued for our use to-day. Hymns, prayers, poetry, and reproductions of paintings and sculpture whose themes are religious; materials which reverently describe the beauty and the orderly processes of the natural world; discussions of personal problems, from one's attitude toward the opposite sex to one's choice of a vocation; discussions of current social and economic questions, from the control of the liquor traffic to the League of Nations; discussions of religion and science, religion and ethics, religion and humanitarian movements, and the origin and function of the Church; the necessity of rethinking the missionary enterprise; the beliefs and institutions of non-Christian religions—all these have found their way into the curriculums of our Church Schools.¹ These facts are an illustration of the extent to which we have committed ourselves to the theory of a life-centered curriculum.

But many of us who are in sympathy with that theory are concerned lest, in carrying it too far, a generation should be allowed to grow up that does not know the Bible. We are especially disturbed lest our young people, who talk so freely about "the Christian way of meeting life situations and the Christian way of solving economic and international problems," should not know the Christ of the Gospels or the Christian Way of the New Testament. To be more specific, there are at least five reasons why

¹ **Note.** The extent to which this situation exists varies among the different denominations and the different sections of the country.

we desire to have the Bible occupy a major place in the curriculum.

First, the Bible is an intensely human book. From Genesis to Revelation we find a moving picture of the human race, extending over a period of hundreds of years. Here are men and women who are behaving in all manner of ways and standing in the midst of every conceivable human situation. To be sure, the external circumstances of their lives differ from ours. The times have greatly changed. But human nature has not greatly changed. "Mankind," said Goethe, "is always advancing, but man is always the same." The Bible story unfolds before us like a scroll. Majestic figures move across the stage—kings, rulers, generals, makers of war, and builders of civilization. One by one they pass away. Then the stage is filled with prophets, poets, dreamers, men of insight and foresight, men of courage and vision. There are common people, also, like the great rank and file of us, but these common people are always doing uncommon things. We see weak men becoming strong and rising to superb heights of endurance and grandeur. The Good Samaritan, for example, has become in literature what Millet's *The Sower* is in art—the immortalization of the common man. The Bible is the most illuminating record which we possess of man's hopes and fears, his struggles and temptations, his sins and virtues, his failures and achievements; and particularly of those deep, underlying causes by which his restless and aspiring life has been dragged down or lifted to the heights.

Second, the Bible is a book of remarkable literary excellence. We know that the educational value of

cultural materials cannot be divorced from the form in which they are presented. The story of man's religious adventure which is given in the Bible is not mediated to us in halting and uncouth language. It comes to us in the noblest prose and poetry that the world has produced. "The manner of the supreme books," writes Dr. Dinsmore, "is as memorable as their matter. In their sentences is the rhythm of great music, the grace of the polished shaft, the glitter of a flight of silver arrows. Truth unadorned does not live in the memory of men, but truth plus beauty equals immortality."² Of course we do not look for "the magic word and the grace of the perfect sentence" on every page. But in the flowing, narrative style of Genesis, Samuel, Ruth, and the first three Gospels, in the lyric loveliness of The Psalms, in the impassioned preaching of the earlier prophets, and in the epic grandeur of Isaiah, Job, and portions of the letter to the Romans, we have not only phrases but whole chapters which are like the "rhythm of great music" and the "flight of silver arrows." These passages not only haunt us with their beauty but undergird us with their eternal truth.

Third, the Bible contains practically all that we know of the earthly career of Jesus and of the impact of his personality upon his followers and the members of the Early Church that bears his name. We cannot understand Jesus' way of life or his message for our generation unless we are familiar

² Dinsmore, Charles A., "English Bible as Literature," p.

5. Used by permission of and by arrangement with Houghton Mifflin Company, 1931.

with the story of his life and teachings as contained in the Gospel accounts. There we see more than the record of earthly events. We behold religion becoming concrete in a life. We see what faith in God's nature and will can mean, for we discover what they meant to Jesus. We understand what human jealousy and hatred will lead groups of men to do, for we see them combining to rid the world of Jesus. We come to know the heights and depths of love, for in Jesus' life and death we see the length to which love will go. All that great religion is concerned to produce—hope, courage, purpose, sincerity, faith, and sacrifice—are brought to complete realization in Jesus.

Moreover, unless we know the writings of Paul and John and the other literature of the New Testament, we cannot understand the nature of that faith in the risen Christ which has made him central in our religion. It is not enough to be able to say with Paul, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me," Gal. 2:20. One must be able to read that text in its entire context and see how such a faith grew and developed in the thought of Paul and of his contemporaries. If our pupils do not know Jesus of Nazareth and the risen Christ as the New Testament presents him, they have missed the most outstanding personality in human history and the source of power in our Christian culture.

Fourth, the Bible shows us God at work in his

world. From that first phrase, "In the beginning God," Gen. 1:1, to the closing sentence, "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with the saints. Amen," Rev. 22:21, the spirit of the Eternal is brooding over this unfolding epic of human adventure. Here one beholds God's revelation of himself to man and man's attempt to hear what God is saying and what God wants man to be and do. Slowly, haltingly, and often with long periods of moral and spiritual depression, man's great adventure to appreciate the divine nature and purpose goes on. But it goes on! The Bible is a sublime record of God's revelation and of man's discernment of that revelation, from the day when Abraham went out from Ur to Canaan, "not knowing whither he went" (Gen., ch. 12), to that great moment when Jesus said, "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time . . . but I say unto you" (Matt., ch. 5). That is why men have called the Bible the Word of God; for throughout its pages

"Standeth God within the shadow
Keeping watch above His own."

Fifth, these reasons for using the Bible have gained fresh significance from the work of reverent scholars. They have unlocked the Bible for us. They have classified its contents, according to the historical periods in which its writings were produced. They have described the original documents from which these writings have been taken, so that we can compare their style and points of view as they appear in various Biblical books. They have traced the changes in man's discernment of the nature and will of God, the meaning of life, the standards of right

and wrong, the problem of evil and suffering, and the goal of human society. They have helped us to see that we cannot properly speak of the Biblical teaching concerning God or man or society; but that we must be careful to speak of the particular concepts regarding these matters held at different periods of the nation's history or by the various authors of the sixty-six books of which the Bible consists. For example, when one speaks of moral teachings in the Bible, he should make it clear whether he is referring to the tribal ethics of The Book of Judges or to the dream of international good will of The Book of Jonah. Thanks to reverent scholarship, one can now read the Bible as a whole, judging its parts according to the social and moral standards of the age that produced them, or, better still, judging them by the moral and spiritual standards disclosed in the prophets and in Jesus. We have a new Bible. Scholarship, archæology, literary criticism, and reverent exegesis have made it speak to us modern men and women in a way that our grandfathers could not hear.

There are five criteria³ which I should like to suggest to those who use the Bible in their Christian teaching:

1. Our use of the Bible should be in harmony with the prevailing and generally accepted standards of Biblical scholarship. We should understand the origin and character of the passage which we are teaching and be sure that our lesson treatment is

³ These are modifications of the criteria used in the writer's "Use of the Old Testament in Current Curricula," pp. 19-47. D. Appleton-Century Company, 1929.

fair to the facts of the passage. Do not force a passage to say what it does not say.

2. Our use of the Bible should contribute to our pupils' understanding of the spirit and ideals of Jesus. This means that we should select those portions of the Bible, which, in addition to the Gospels, support and reveal the spirit that was in Jesus. It also means that whenever we use other portions of the Bible which are unchristian or sub-Christian, we should not fail to contrast them with the standards of Jesus.

3. We should use those portions of the Bible which are suited to the comprehension of the particular grade or group which we are teaching. Most of the Bible is the record of adult experience. It is written by adults about adults and for adults. This means that relatively little Biblical material is suited to the comprehension of children in the Beginners or Primary Departments. In the Junior Department more Biblical material of a biographical character can be used, but it must be selected with great care. The experience of Job, the preaching of the prophets, the Gospel of John, the Pauline correspondence, and much besides can scarcely be comprehended before the later adolescent period.

4. The Biblical material used should stimulate the moral and personal growth of your pupils. It should be chosen because it sheds light on their personal problems and situations. It should afford them relevant ideas and ideals which they can put to use. It should indicate lines of action which they can follow. It should help them to answer their personal

religious questions about God and man, life and death and the hereafter.

5. The Biblical materials used should be in harmony with the Christian ideal of the Kingdom of God and with the most Christian hopes and plans for the social order. The teachings of Deuteronomy, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Amos, and Micah; the books of Ruth and Jonah; and portions of The Psalms, The Proverbs, the Gospels, James, and the epistles of Paul and John are positive to this criterion. Wherever Biblical passages of the opposite sort are chosen (for example, portions of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Ezra, Ecclesiastes, Nahum, the psalms of vengeance, et cetera) the teacher should not fail to contrast them with the teaching of Jesus and to show their sub-Christian character.

Shall We Still Use Textbooks? It is not possible here to list the texts that are available. Their number is legion. There are the Uniform Lesson Series and the graded and departmentally graded series edited and published by various denominations; the Sunday, Week Day, and Vacation Church School texts published and promoted by denominational houses and through interdenominational co-operation. One cannot classify these materials together and evaluate them with a few swift strokes. They vary greatly in respect to every criterion which we might set up. But the following generalizations may be offered:

First, many progressive teachers who wish to make use of the life problems and situations of their pupils find it most difficult to use the Uniform Lessons. They are material-centered. The teacher must suit

the application of the lesson and adapt his own illustrations to the materials which are specified for the day. They might fit in with your purpose; often they are too rigid and remote to be of much practical use in a life-centered curriculum.

Second, the progressive teacher of the younger grades will probably do well to use the graded materials of his denomination. This is likely to combine—does in some cases combine—the life situations of children of the age specified with a good deal of Biblical and extra-Biblical material. Younger children are not so problem-conscious as are older children, and their interests and situations are not so significant or so capable of expansion as to warrant a teacher in building a year's program about them. This doesn't mean that they should not be used. But they can usually be fitted into a year's program and dealt with as they arise.

Third, within the older groups (Intermediates, Seniors, Young People, and Adults) the teacher must expect to find interests and problems of increasing significance and maturity. He would do well to make full use of them in planning and executing his work as urged in Study VI. But he will constantly need materials to enrich the experience of his class and of himself. These materials should consist largely of the records of human experience, the story of man's aspiration and his personal and collective achievement. The pupils' interests and situations ought to indicate what printed material is needed—whether biography, history, science, poetry, or story. The teacher's needs should indicate where

he needs help on content and method. For these purposes there may well be used texts dealing with the life of Jesus, Paul, the prophets, the heroes of the Bible, the leaders in the Early Church, modern biography, poetry, adventure, scientific achievement, personal problems, social problems, religious beliefs, and narratives which describe notable service or missionary endeavor in our own land or in other lands. The wise and ingenious teacher will use such materials, whether in Quarterly or book form, not as textbooks to be followed slavishly lesson by lesson, but as source books in which relevant and essential material can be found. Instead of having one Quarterly or text, the class should own several books, magazines, and texts, which can be used in gathering data that bear upon the problem under discussion.

Fourth, the progressive teacher need not be afraid to use printed subject matter. Don't be frightened by those who tell you to teach without textbooks. They are right in saying that the use of a text, which one follows slavishly, is conducive to transmissive teaching. When one has a body of material rich in cultural and religious value he wants to pass it on. But progressive teaching is not tied up to any one type of material—primary or secondary. It must make use of both.

Summary. You will use your pupils' interests to motivate their work; to help you to decide where to lay your emphasis; to guide you in the selection of secondary source material. But you will also use the printed page to enrich your own thinking and theirs; to expand the horizon of their aspirations; and to

stimulate their curiosity, their resolution, and their action. Such material will be found both in the Bible and outside. Texts which furnish data for thinking, which enlarge knowledge, which provoke choices, which acquaint one with great ideals, which record pupil conversation and behavior in actual class sessions, which suggest alternative activities or projects, are indispensable tools in the hands of the progressive teacher. But you will not use such texts as solutions of your problems or as substitutes for your own thinking. Ultimately you and your pupils must do your own thinking and solve your own problems.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL STUDY AND THOUGHT

1. What Quarterly or text are you using in your Church School class? Who writes it and who publishes it? How does it happen that you are using it?

2. Do you find it satisfactory? If not, what are its shortcomings? In what respects do you wish it were different?

3. When you confine your teaching to what your textbook or Quarterly contains, do you feel that you are missing some opportunity? What is it?

4. If primary source materials are as truly at your disposal as written records, why should you hesitate to use them? What is the value of written records?

5. How can you make secondary materials "come alive"? Take some Biblical incident (for example, the call of Moses, the temptation of Jesus, the conversion of Paul) and develop it as the Samuel-Eli incident was developed in this study.

6. Do you agree with the writer's statements concerning the importance of the Bible? If so, how do they affect your teaching?

7. Are you in the habit of treating Biblical material as if it were all of the same moral and spiritual excellence? How else might you treat it?

8. What kinds of texts do you think you need in your teaching, and how would you propose to use them?

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STUDY VIII

THE TEACHER'S USE OF SPECIFIC METHODS: THE STORY AND THE DRAMA

At the end of Study VI, we were thinking of ways by which we can become more effective teachers. I suggested the importance of comparing one's self with outstanding teachers of one's acquaintance, and then of rating one's self on the basis of such comparison by the use of a chart or graph. This method is often called "the self-rating scale."

Let us assume that you have followed the suggestion and have rated yourself as "poor" in the column marked "good teaching." This would indicate that you have come to the conclusion that you need help at the point of specific methods of teaching. To give you such help is the purpose of this study.

In any text dealing solely with methods of teaching, one finds a variety of distinct techniques set forth and illustrated with much detail. Such books are listed in the bibliography at the end of this study. In a book of this character, however, where many aspects of the teacher's function must be discussed, only a portion of our space can be given to the consideration of specific methods. I shall not, therefore, describe every possible technique, but shall deal with certain important ones only, endeavoring in the treatment of each to show what the method is, why and under what circumstances it should be employed, how one can increase his efficiency in its use, and how the method can become an instrument for the achievement of the aims of progressive teaching, discussed in previous studies.

In this study we shall deal with the methods of storytelling and dramatization; in the next study, with the discussion method and the project.

The Place of Method in Teaching. Thus far we

have been saying that in order to teach effectively we must take certain steps.

1. We must try to understand our pupils—their interests, their capacities, their needs, and their differences. The mastery of method is no substitute for such understanding.

2. We must be sure of our aims—both our ultimate and our immediate aims. We must know what we are trying to do, and we must always ask in preparation for every session with our class, “What am I trying to accomplish to-day?” The mastery of method is no substitute for this clear consciousness of aim.

3. We must know the problem which we would help our pupils to face. We must see it clearly and make ourselves familiar not only with its central issue but also with its many ramifications and bearings. We must determine how we will “smoke out” the problem, so that our pupils will recognize it themselves and become anxious to solve it, because they see its bearing upon their own conduct and the welfare of the larger community. Mastering a specific method is no substitute for this step.

4. We must know the materials that bear upon the problem under discussion. Whether they are primary or secondary source materials (cf. Study VII), we should be more familiar with them than we really need to be. That is, we ought to “overknow” them, to know more about them than we can possibly convey to our pupils or have time to bring into the teaching session. The good teacher will always be searching for new ways of clarifying his points. He will find his illustrations in many places—in his reading of books and newspapers, in his observation of nature

and of human behavior, in his conversation and in his own thinking. He will continually ask himself, "How can I make this truth clear or that point significant?" He will imagine that his pupils are asking him questions about the material or the problem, and he will say to himself, "If they should ask me this or that, what would I say?" Then he will answer these imaginary questions as clearly and cogently as he is able. Proficiency in method can never take the place of a thorough familiarity with material.

But, although the teacher has acquired a degree of competence in these four regards—understanding of pupil interests and needs, clear perception of aims, acquaintance with the problem to be dealt with, and familiarity with the materials that bear upon its solution—he must still decide just how he will proceed. What medium will serve his purpose best? Should he give a lecture, tell a story, preach a sermon, lead a discussion, ask questions, develop a play, or initiate a project? Clearly he must choose among these specific methods. He cannot use them all at once.

His case is comparable to that of a builder who has been engaged to erect a house. He must understand the needs of the persons who are to live in the house; he must know what sort of house he is to build; he must be able to cope with special problems of construction—drainage, plumbing, lighting, climatic conditions, arrangement of rooms, building codes, costs, et cetera; and he must have a working knowledge of his materials—wood, brick, stone, mortar, plaster, and the suitability of each for the purpose he has in mind. But having clearly perceived these items, he must still decide which tools should be employed in each stage

of the construction. Shall he use hammer, saw, square, spirit level, or trowel? Watch your builder and observe that his use of the proper implement enables him to construct his house. These tools and the builder's competence in their use are comparable to specific methods of teaching and their use by a skillful teacher.

How Can We Tell What Method to Use? We cannot always be sure, but there are certain principles that may guide us:

1. *The Age of Our Pupils.* It is obvious that the story method is peculiarly suited to children of the earlier grades, and that the discussion method is most effective at the adolescent levels.

2. *The Nature of the Problem.* Some problems need to be analyzed by means of the discussion method; some should be illuminated by the use of assigned readings and supervised study; some require a lecture or extended comment in order that the data and issues may be grasped.

3. *The Nature of the Material.* Biographical materials, such as the incidents from the lives of Moses (Ex., chs. 2 ff.), and of Paul (The Acts), are often best presented by the story. Materials which are inherently dramatic, like the Joseph stories (Gen., chs. 37 ff.), and The Book of Esther, might well be put into the form of drama. Materials which involve problematical issues, such as the entrance of the United States into the League of Nations, are usually presented most effectively by the discussion method.

4. *The Nature of Our Aim.* Is it your aim to increase your pupils' knowledge? This may be best achieved by reading, directed study, lecture, and the

examination of material considered to ascertain if your pupils have understood it. Is it your aim to promote their thinking? This may be attained by showing them how to attack their problem, how to be critical of the facts which they use, and how to be wise in the drawing of conclusions. No method is quite so successful in this respect as the discussion method, with its provision for free exchange of knowledge and judgment. Is it your aim to quicken your pupils' appreciation of the beautiful or the good or the true? Then the most effective method is to set the theme or subject before them in story, picture, nature study, drama, music, worship—any one of which may serve as the medium in which the beautiful or the good or the true finds concrete expression. Is it your aim to promote growth in Christian character and religious experience? Then the project principle, or method, will probably be most serviceable, for its genius is to promote learning through doing.

5. *Our Skill in the Use of Methods.* I have known masters of story-telling who were hopelessly "at sea" when they attempted to ask or answer questions. Others are adept in leading discussions but unable to initiate and carry through a piece of dramatization. In my judgment that teacher is wise who uses the methods which he can employ most effectively. This doesn't mean, however, that if one can tell a story well he should always tell stories; or that if he is skillful in leading a discussion, he should always use the discussion method. That would be comparable to a carpenter who is so devoted to his saw that he insists upon driving nails with it. But the teacher will do well at first to employ those methods for which

he is best adapted, and not to make use of other methods until he has become reasonably familiar with their techniques. Of course, the all-round teacher is the one who has a repertoire of methods and can move freely throughout the range of techniques which he has more or less mastered.

Often the teacher is led almost intuitively to choose his method. He selects this or that technique as an artist selects his colors and brushes. Jesus gives the impression of making his choices in this fashion. For example, when a lawyer came to him asking, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Luke 10:25, Jesus had to "size up" the lawyer and get to the heart of his question. What was the man driving at? Jesus decided that the thing to do was to ask the lawyer some questions; so he said, "What is written in the law?" Observe that, in order to ask that question and to deal with the lawyer's answer to it, Jesus had to know the law and the attitude of the Jews toward it. The man made reply. Then there was more conversation. (Note the method.) Then the lawyer asked a question: "Who is my neighbor?" Here was the heart of the problem. Up to this point Jesus had used the question-and-answer method. Now he decided to shift to the story method, and proceeded without delay to tell the story of the Good Samaritan. Jesus knew his man, who at that moment was his pupil. He knew the law, which was the man's chief interest. He knew the inner aspiration of the man, which was deeper and more fundamental than his professional need. He knew that the best way to meet the man's real need was by telling a story. He knew what type of story would "fit,"

and he knew how to tell it. Observe again that Jesus was competent to meet this situation when it presented itself. His fund of knowledge about human nature and human need, his ability to deal with individuals, his skill in asking questions and in telling stories, had been built up across the years by observation, conversation, and practice. His questions were sharp, clear, and to the point. His stories were interesting, imaginative, pertinent. They were never told just for the sake of telling them. They "belonged" in the place where he told them. They always shed light on the main issue.

The Story Method. We must know what a story is. It is not just description, like a newspaper account of a fire. It is not a chapter from a history textbook. It is an artistic product, with a structure peculiar to itself. There are principles for its construction, comparable to the principles of design in painting or of composition in music.

Let us think for a moment about story structure, and illustrate our points by examining one of Jesus' parables. His parables follow the principles of accepted story design and have the great merit of being concrete, colorful, and brief. It would be well to pause here and read Luke 19:12-27, the parable of The Pounds.

1. Observe that the story has a *beginning*. "A certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return." Notice how short this beginning is. It serves to introduce the hearer to the chief character. It whets his interest. He wants to know more about this nobleman—who he is, what

he is going to do, and where he is going to do it. This is the function of the beginning of a story.

2. Note that the story contains a succession of events, sometimes called the *body*. Read again vs. 13-23. The nobleman called ten servants, gave them one pound each, and told them to trade with the same until he returned. Then he went on his journey. When he came back, he straightway summoned his servants to hear what they had gained by trading.

Servant "A" comes with a good report. His pound has been made to earn ten pounds more. With just a few strokes Jesus sketches this successful, business-minded servant and his delighted master. (No questions are asked about how the money was multiplied.) "Well done, thou good servant," he says; "because thou wast found faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities." The story is unfolding smoothly and carrying your attention forward.

Servant "B" approaches his master. What will he say? Will he tell as big a tale or a bigger one? "Thy pound, Lord, hath made five pounds." Only half as much gain! What will the nobleman do? No, you are wrong. He commends the servant, in almost the same words: "Be thou also over five cities." What now? Will Jesus go through the list of ten, with the same formula and the same refrain? What a bore this story is going to be! But wait.

Servant "C" is coming timidly, with the original pound wrapped in a napkin. He is not saying proudly, "I've made ten pounds," or "five" or "three." He hasn't made anything. "I feared thee," he begins, "because thou art an austere man: thou . . . reapest that which thou didst not sow." The story

is moving faster now, and the hearer is wondering what will happen next, for the nobleman is a hard man and full of power. He turns on the cringing servant: "Thou knewest that I am an austere man, taking up that which I laid not down, and reaping that which I did not sow; then wherefore gavest thou not my money into the bank, and I at my coming should have required it with interest?" The tale has moved forward. No idle word has been used. Every clause has served to "unwind the thread of the story." Jesus does not hesitate, nor say, "I'm sorry, I forgot to tell you that the nobleman wore a red hat." No irrelevant word interrupts the progress of the tale.

3. Note the *climax*. You are ready for it. Something must happen soon. What will it be? Will the nobleman strike the servant, throw him into jail, or order him killed? The interest is cumulative, yet it halts for a moment, as perhaps Jesus halted when he told the story. The climax must not be missed. "Take away from him the pound," thunders the nobleman, "and [How would you finish the sentence if you had never read it?] give it unto him that hath the ten pounds." Note the surprise! The climax should be surcharged with surprise. The listeners should feel it. Here everybody feels it—the man who is losing his pound, the fortunate fellow who gets it, and the astounded bystanders who exclaim, "Lord, he hath ten pounds." Everybody is astounded, including ourselves. This is a marvelous example of climax.

4. The story should have an *ending*, and every writer on the subject will caution you to make it short. When the story-teller has reached his climax,

some one should flash a red signal light, "Stop!" Here is where many writers and tellers of short stories fail. They allow the story to trail off into endless nothingness. Suppose that Jesus had said, "Then another servant came, reporting that his one pound had gained four pounds," and another servant three pounds, and so on through the whole ten. Jesus would have spoiled his story. Instead, he brings it to an abrupt close. The nobleman makes a comment and gives an order: "From him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away from him. But these mine enemies, . . . bring hither, and slay them before me." It is a grim tale, but it ends as it begins, with the nobleman (who was anything but noble) playing his rôle consistently. The story does definitely end. It doesn't "peter out." Those last verses are like the closing chords of a symphony. They add nothing to the theme. But they bring the mind to rest.

Why Should We Tell Stories? A variety of reasons occur to us.

1. We may tell them just to give our hearers pleasure. When a teacher says, "Have you heard this story?" the faces of his pupils grow expectant, and a happy relation is established between him and them.

2. We tell stories to give instruction. They carry truth, but in such form that the truth sticks in the mind. Recall a sermon that you heard recently. Probably the stories which the speaker used are most fully and accurately remembered.

3. We tell stories to stir the feelings and to stimulate attitudes on the part of our pupils. A story

creates a stimulus or atmosphere to which the pupil almost involuntarily gives an appropriate response.

4. We use stories because they are excellent "carriers" of moral or spiritual truth. A story the theme of which is love, like Tolstoy's "Where Love Is, There God Is Also," helps us to see the nature of love as it is embodied in real persons. In the David and Jacob stories, we behold the consequences of right conduct or of wrong conduct bearing down upon the lives of both the doers and all related to them. These consequences take place quickly, for a story telescopes the years that lie between an act and its consequences, and brings forcibly to our attention the relation between cause and effect in the moral realm.

What kind of stories shall we tell? All kinds—stories about nature and animals and fairies and children to the younger grades; stories about heroes, and persons who bring things to pass, to our Juniors; stories of romance and chivalry, of service and altruism, to our young men and women. Such stories ought to be human stories which come up out of the lives of people. Even if the characters are imaginary they should be true to life. Stories should carry their own moral so that it will not need to be pointed out. That is, the lesson should be woven into the texture of the tale.

Stories should have few characters, so that the hearer can easily become acquainted with them and can follow their adventures, and a single theme or plot—not several themes that "double back" upon each other. Stories should have much direct discourse. Make your characters talk. Don't describe what they say, as, "The hero said that he was going

to leave home," but make the hero say, "I'm leaving home!" Remember that little children like to have animals and flowers talk to one another.

Stories should have action. They should move forward. In life things happen, and a story is a concrete transcript of life. Our stories should contain moral and religious truths. Many excellent stories, positive to all the criteria which we have thus far set up, are not suitable for use in the Church School. Our stories should stimulate the kind of moral and religious attitudes which we wish to promote in our pupils. They should not present abstract qualities, but persons who embody them; not unnatural "goody-goody" persons (there are no persons of this type in the Bible), but flesh-and-blood persons who find it hard to be faithful, true, and bold, but who triumph over their fear and their selfishness.

How Can We Become Better Story-Tellers? First, choose a story that will produce the feeling, mood, or behavior response which you desire. Second, read your story through, and revise it according to the principles discussed in the preceding pages. Some stories will need to be cut for they are too long. Some will need to be rearranged so that the succession of events in the "body" will be more cumulative and the climax sharper. Some will need to be changed from indirect discourse into direct discourse. Others will require the elimination of superfluous characters and incidents.

Third, tell your story to yourself until the characters live and the situations become real. Tell it until you are at home with the words you are to use. Watch your words. Are they pleasant to hear—con-

crete, simple, English words? Watch your sentences. Are they clear and crisp? Have you made your characters speak to one another?

Finally, when you tell your story to your actual audience, fix your attention on your story. Incidentally, watch the faces of your hearers. Try to get the sense of sharing your story with your group. Feel the events in your story and feel your audience. Don't act your story, or move about, or make gestures, or indulge in mannerisms which will make your group conscious of yourself. Forget yourself. Remember that you are just a mouthpiece through which the story of human life is to find its way into other lives.

The Dramatic Method. The dramatic method is closely related to the story method. Much that has been said about the latter applies here. The chief difference is that in the dramatic method the theme is developed by the characters themselves, who speak their own words and express their emotions in voice, posture, gesture, and impersonation.

Why Should We Use It? Largely because we enjoy it so much. Little children "play act" whatever they see or hear, and adolescents eagerly take part in dramas and pageants. This natural interest is doubtless due to certain universal impulses: the urge to imitate the voice, manner, and activities of others; to express our ideas and ideals in concrete forms; to find an outlet for our feelings in emotional or physical activity; and so to appear before our fellows that we may receive their approval and praise. Obviously a method which is itself so interesting and which gives expression to so many natural impulses has a large place in the teaching-learning process.

What Is Its Value for the Religious Educator?

First, it helps the pupil to forget himself. He finds in his part a vehicle for his self-expression, and thereby overcomes his self-consciousness in the presence of others. Second, it helps the pupil to put himself in the place of another. It calls for an understanding of the character, and of the situations in which the character lives. Life for the pupil becomes larger as he lives the life of another. If he plays the part of a character who is braver or finer than himself, he must cast off his own limitations and be that braver or finer person. This means a rehearsal by the pupil of larger activities and emotional reactions than belong to his normal lot, especially if he assumes an adult rôle. It is believed by many, though it has not yet been proved by objective tests, that the experiences of a pupil in dramatic impersonation carry over into his actual conduct.

Third, it helps the pupil to make right responses to situations. Suppose that the situation is highly irritating and the actor keeps his poise; or suppose that it is full of terror and he acts the part of a hero. Then on the stage a connection is made between situations and appropriate behavior. Of course, a person is better able to make these responses on the stage than he is in real life; in fact, on the stage the response is indicated or demanded. When a young man plays the part of Joseph in the scene where Joseph forgives his brethren, the play demands that he forgive rather than get even. Perhaps it is too naïve to assume that because a lad plays the part of Joseph he will become more forgiving. Probably one could affirm with more certainty that when a lad actually

practices forgiveness toward some one who has wronged him then he has really begun to form the habit of forgiveness. But while the dramatic method is not so genuine as an actual life situation, nevertheless it does what the story and sermon cannot do: it provides for an overt response in word, action, and feeling to the stimulus of the situation in the drama.

Finally, the drama aids the pupil to perceive moral and religious values. There upon the stage where he plays a part, or in the audience, he sees the effect of right-doing or of wrongdoing upon the doer and upon all others who are concerned in the plot. Moreover, the plot heads up into its consequences more speedily than it ever does in real life. The culprit is detected and punished, or the hero is acclaimed, within the space of the play. Again, one must admit that both good and evil on the stage have much of the make-believe about them. Nevertheless, a play is useful if it helps us to see how things work out in real life. Furthermore, when a drama contains characters who, by their words, manner, and emotion, reveal a genuine religious experience, we see what religion means to them and how it helps them to meet the crises which the play contains. To be sure, it is not our own experience. But do we not learn from the experience of others when it is faithfully portrayed?

How May We Use the Dramatic Method in Religious Education? There are many ways. I shall describe two only. First, we may purchase a published play (the payment of royalty is often required), cast it, rehearse it, and produce it before an

audience. Plays and pageants of all sorts are available. One must keep in mind the age and capacity of his group, the amount of time that can be given to the memorization of lines and to rehearsals, and the suitability of the play for moral and religious purposes. Given time, talent, and a large degree of hard work, this type of method is likely to yield the most finished production.

A second type, I believe, has more educational value. It is sometimes called educational dramatization. Its purpose is not to develop good actors or to give a finished production before an audience. Its object is the growth of the pupils who use the method. There are at least six steps in the procedure. I shall record them as they were actually followed by a group of my students and illustrate them by a play which they created.

1. After the nature of the method had been discussed, the prophecy of Amos was selected for dramatization. It was chosen because of its dramatic quality and its bearing upon the problem of social justice.

2. The prophecy was carefully studied, to note its moments of tension and climax, its central moral and religious values, and its universal human elements. The history and customs of Amos' time were examined in order to make his character and message intelligible.

3. The story of Amos was told by a member of the group. The incidents in the prophecy were so arranged that they led straight into the climax which was sharp and clear. Direct discourse was constantly used.

4. The story was then divided into dramatic epi-

sodes or scenes, characters were chosen and some new ones invented, and the plot was arranged to provide for action and unity. Scene I is an open space in front of a tent, where the father of Amos and two of his friends are discussing the strange mood into which Amos has fallen. Amos enters and tells them of his purpose to go to Beth-el. A voice off stage (his conscience) bids him go and tells him what to say. Scene II is a public place in Beth-el, where a poor debtor is being offered for sale on the auction block. The man's wife is pleading for him, but the auctioneer will show no mercy. Amos enters, and in the language of the original prophecy condemns the whole proceeding. The crowd recognizes him as the strange shepherd who preached in their streets the day before. The high priest remonstrates and Amos denounces the priestly system in his famous saying, "I hate, I despise your feasts." In Scene III Amos is brought before the priestly court and tried. Again he pleads for justice toward the poor and denounces the sins of Israel. He is asked to retract his words or to leave the country. He refuses to keep still and is cast out.

5. The language of the play was written out in full. The exact words of the Bible were used in the dialogue. Where additional characters were introduced, as in Scene II, suitable Scriptural language was assigned to them. The writing was done by members of the group, who worked on different scenes. Then the episodes were put together, and any inharmonious elements in the dialogue or structure were smoothed out. Stage directions were added and the entire play was typed.

6. The play was produced before the entire class. There were no costumes, scenery, make-up, or lighting. The parts were not even memorized. They were read and acted as well as possible under such limitations. If there had been time, this part of the process might have been more finished and effective. But we were not interested in directing or production. The net result, in addition to great interest, was an understanding of the character and message of Amos, a vivid appreciation of his "aliveness" and modernity such as had not been attained in formal courses of Biblical literature, and the sense of having shared in a coöperative and worth-while enterprise.

All sorts of episodes are available for this type of dramatization—incidents from the Bible, from biography, history, the mission field, and modern life. They may be extremely simple and suited to little children, or complex enough to test the talent and the mettle of the older adolescent. The procedure indicated in the six preceding steps can generally be followed, whatever the age of your pupils or the type of episode to be dramatized.

With younger children, the dialogue need not be written out. It may be expressed as the child imagines it should be. It is often wise to encourage children to try various parts and to interpret them in different ways. This makes for self-expression and creativity.

The Teacher's Part in the Dramatic Method. Needless to say, this is a very important part. The teacher must be able to stir the enthusiasm of his pupils to undertake the play; he must be a good coach; he must be able to tell a story vividly; he must

have a flair for dramatic effects; he must help his pupils to plan scenes, to phrase their dialogue, and to speak their lines. But he must not do these things for them. As he proceeds he may well ask himself the following questions: (1) Is the material suited to the age interests and capacities of my pupils? (2) Does the material have dramatic qualities? (3) Is the play fair to the facts in the original story or incident? (4) Are the scenes clear-cut and does each contribute to the unfolding of the plot? (5) Are the events or allusions in each scene made clear by what has already taken place in the play? (6) Does the dialogue give adequate expression to the character and mood of the speaker? (7) Are the characters true to life? (8) Is there tension in the situations and some suspense leading to the climax? (9) Does the play contain characters and ideas which are positive "carriers" of moral principles and of a genuine religious experience?

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL STUDY AND THOUGHT

1. How do you rate yourself on your teaching technique?
2. Which method or methods of teaching do you use most successfully or constantly?
3. How do you decide which method to use?
4. What kinds of stories should you tell your class, and why?
5. Choose some story from the Bible and analyze it to discover its structure. Then rearrange it to secure more progress in the "body" and a more definite climax.
6. Prepare and tell a story to your class. Ask some fellow teacher to be present. Invite him or her to join you in criticizing your performance on the basis of the principles discussed in this study.
7. Attempt some simple dramatization of the educational type. Follow the brief suggestions indicated in this study. Consult some of the books listed below for additional data

and suggestions. Then try another dramatization of the same type.

8. What makes a story or a play religious?

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Note. Consult your denominational headquarters for lists of plays and pageants suitable for religious purposes.

STUDY IX

THE TEACHER'S USE OF SPECIFIC METHODS: THE DISCUSSION METHOD AND THE PROJECT

In considering the discussion and the project methods of teaching, I shall make the same approach that was followed in the preceding study. May I, therefore, assume that you are asking these questions about each method: What is its essential nature and genius? What reasons are urged for its use? What are typical illustrations of its use? How can the teacher improve his skill in its use? What particular contribution does it make to the newer emphasis in teaching?

The Discussion Method. The genius of this method may best be understood if one remembers that it is essentially a protest against the formal lecture and the old-fashioned recitation. In the formal lecture, the teacher, having gathered his material from a variety of sources and having arranged it in a certain order, delivers it to his students. He may read it or speak it from memory; it may be concise and well-organized or diffuse and rambling; it may be deadly dull or brilliantly informing and stimulating. The lecturer may invite interruptions or call for questions at the close. He may discourage both. In any case, it is the lecturer himself who tries to command the situation and control the learning process. His pupils are recipients of what he has prepared.

The old-fashioned recitation is similar in its genius

although different in its technique. The teacher, having assigned the next block of material to be covered—"the next lesson in the Quarterly and the questions at the end of the pupil's manual"—proceeds in class to ask those questions and to test his pupils' ability to recite the answers. He may read the questions, he may rephrase them in his own words, or he may invent questions of his own. Usually he is concerned to bring out the facts of the material rather than its meaning or application. The process is often accompanied by little original thought or independence of judgment on the part of the pupils. A premium is placed upon knowledge of subject matter. Again, as in the lecture, the teacher is in control. Both methods are excellent examples of transmissive teaching. (Compare Study I.)

By contrast, the discussion method provides a free opportunity for spontaneous interchange of thinking and opinion on the part of all the members of the group. Each assumes the integrity of the others' convictions. No one subordinates his opinion or refrains from expressing it. But each, in the spirit of good sportsmanship, expects to have his contribution criticized, its strong points supported and its weak points attacked by the presentation of fresh facts or judgments.

The discussion method is not an argument or debate in which one member of the group tries to prove his contention in the face of opposition. The genius of the method is a search for truth, the discovery of issues, and the finding of sound conclusions. It is an experience in which there is a candid pooling of data, experiences, and opinions, and in the

midst of which the thinking of each member is stimulated by the clash of other minds and the presentation of other points of view.

Of course, there must be a discussible problem. The problem must not only be worthy of consideration; it must seem to the members to be worthy. It must be a problem which is "felt" by the group to have importance. It ought, therefore, to deal with certain of the major issues which affect the life of the group. There must also be a leader whose function it is to guide the discussion and keep it focused on the central issue. He may know in advance what line he would like to have the discussion follow and where he would prefer to have it come out. But, unlike the transmissive teacher, he will not force his conclusion upon the group. His task is to guide the group to come to its own conclusion or conclusions.

What Reasons Are Urged for the Use of This Method? If the members of the group take the method seriously, each will feel a sense of responsibility for the conduct of the session. Each will take his turn at "carrying the ball." As one of my colleagues once said to a silent member of a discussion group, "England expects every man to do his duty." To the extent that each person participates to the limit of his ability, his interest and attention will be sustained. One never knows who will speak next or what will be said. It is like a game in which each play depends upon the preceding play. One must be constantly alive and alert or he is out of the game. The very clash of opinion sharpens and quickens one's thought and under the stimulus of the give-and-take of the hour, the mind hits upon ideas that

might never be born in solitude. It makes for self-expression—sometimes, of course, for unreasoned and unjustified self-expression. But one soon learns to be careful about what he says and how he says it lest he lay himself open to criticism. It is not necessary to claim in defense of this method that there is no thinking when one reads a book, listens to a lecture, or recites his lesson in answer to a teacher's question. There may be active thinking or there may be passive and uncritical acceptance of what has been written or said. But surely the discussion method, for those who take an active share in it, does make for thinking, and it is usually thinking of an active and creative sort.

What Are Typical Illustrations of Its Use? I shall take one example from the adolescent level, for which the method is especially recommended. Let us assume that the topic for the day is "What Can Prayer Do for Us?"¹ Let us also assume that the class or group has suggested the topic. Sometimes a group of young people will indicate a number of topics in which the various members are interested or a list of problems which are causing them difficulty. Prayer is almost sure to be in such a list. The leader would do well to explore the problem with his group in advance of the actual discussion period. He might say: "You have suggested this topic. What aspects of it are troubling you?"

It will probably appear that some have given up the habit of prayer because it seems to them to be

¹ **Note.** This topic and certain points used in this example are taken from Harry T. Stock's "Problems of Christian Youth," pp. 48 ff. The Pilgrim Press, 1927.

useless; others are realizing that their prayers are perfunctory and formal and that they do not want what they pray for or are ashamed to pray for what they want; others think that it is absurd to ask God to alter his laws or the regular processes of nature; some question whether a God who is great enough to meet the demands of this majestic universe can be concerned with the trivial needs of a solitary individual; and still others, who are helped by their personal prayers, doubt whether praying for absent friends or such causes as world peace and missions is of value. Such an exploratory examination of the problem may cause the leader and his group to decide to spend not only one period on the problem, but two periods or three or more.

The leader must realize that unless there is careful planning and preparation on the part of the group, the discussion itself will be aimless, pointless, and uninformed. It may result in nothing more than a listing of doubts and superficial opinions. As Mr. Stock has well said, "Everyone may talk about everything without knowing very much about anything." We are all familiar with that kind of amiable but fruitless talk. The discussion will be profitable to the extent that the members of the group have done some reading and thinking about specific aspects of the topic in advance of the discussion period. The leader must suggest books, articles, and Biblical references which bear directly upon the topic, and he must be sure that his students have access to such materials. He will probably assign subtopics and appropriate readings to different members and ask them to present the results of their study and thought. If the

subtopics are debatable—and they should be—opposing points of view may be presented. These issues should then be thrown open. The group should deal fairly with the facts presented and should comment frankly on the conclusions which have been drawn.

As the period moves on, the nature of true prayer will undoubtedly be described. Jesus' prayer life will be presented. The Lord's Prayer will be examined. It will be seen that prayer as Jesus used it rests upon the conviction that God cares and hears; that men need divine aid; that prayer brings us into the mood of wanting to know God's plan and of submission to his will; that prayer is not asking God for things but is conversation with him about things; that it is the frank and complete exposal of all we are and all we desire before the presence of a wise and loving Father. Is that the kind of prayer which your group has given up, or have the members discontinued a practice which was not prayer at all?

As the discussion continues, it is important that it should be kept to the major issues. It will be well if the group itself can hold its members to those issues. Otherwise, the leader must remind the group whenever it is getting sidetracked. It is usually helpful if he writes upon a blackboard the main points as they are presented. It is an aid to concentration and to memory. He might put down in parallel columns the suggestions that bear upon the major issues that stand at the head of such columns.

The Prayer Life of Jesus	What Prayer Has Meant to Those Who Understand Its Nature	What Prayer Helps Us to Become and to Do	Obstacles to a Vital Prayer Life
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It is always interesting to watch the leader arrange the facts and judgments expressed under their appropriate headings. It is also helpful at certain times during the period, as well as at the close, to have the discussion summarized. The leader, or a member of the group, may say: "It would seem that up to this moment we are agreed that these facts should be remembered and that we have come to these conclusions"; or: "There seems to be a difference of opinion on this issue. Do we not need to go farther on this point or on that?"

What Must Be the Qualifications of the Leader? Much depends upon the leader if this process is to be successful. He must be fair, tolerant, tactful, and well-poised. He must not shut off relevant remarks. He must not try to force his group to come to his conclusions about the value of prayer. He must encourage them to express their own honest doubts and convictions and in the end help them to come to their own conclusions. He must know the subject and the issues that are raised by the sub-topics. He must see the period in advance as it may unfold in a variety of ways, and be willing to let it unfold as the experience and temper of the group demand. He must be alert in calling forth new ideas and in weaving them into the fabric of the hour. He must "keep the ball rolling," without hurrying the discussion and without letting it drag. He will ask questions and he will sharpen up the answers. His position is that of guide or coach, and always that of friend.

It is very important that the discussion should lead not merely to individual and (so far as is possible)

group conclusions but to individual and group action. What is the use of discussing "What can prayer do for us?" unless the discussion leads into the practice of fruitful prayer? Mr. Stock concludes: "Out of this discussion three results should surely come: (1) A study on the part of the members of some good book on prayer. (2) A regular quiet period of prayer each day for all of the members of the group. (3) Carefully planned worship services in the department, class, or society."²

In choosing this example from the Young People's Department, I would not convey the impression that the discussion method is suitable for use only at this age. It may be used at all ages. If you will review the incident of the air armada (Study I), you will see the manner in which this method was employed by a teacher and her pupils in the second grade (Primary).

Juniors can discuss such questions as: Why are so many families in want and so many fathers unemployed? Why should we play games according to the rules? How can I get along with my brothers and sisters? How often should I go to the "movies" and what sort of pictures should I see? Should I always be loyal to my crowd? How should I treat my parents and my teacher? Should I go to Sunday School when I don't feel like it? What is the use of praying when I don't get what I ask for? In fact, the questions which Juniors are able to discuss are almost legion.

Even Beginners will express their opinions about the beauty and mystery of flowers and birds and

² Stock, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

stars; about being grateful to mother, or being helpful in the home, or caring for toys and pets, or sharing toys with playmates, or obeying traffic signals; or about such ever-recurring questions as where life comes from and who and where God is.

No method lends itself more effectively to the promotion of adult education than this. Groups of adults who have had many first-hand contacts with various phases of life are often concerned to think more deeply into the meaning of their own problems and of the current issues of their world. They find it stimulating to pool their experiences, observations, and reading as they explore some question which they have agreed to investigate. Indeed, at all ages it is possible to have group discussion, provided an interesting question is chosen and the members have some knowledge and experience which they can bring to bear upon it. Obviously the nature of the discussion period, both in content and technique, will vary greatly with the different age levels.

How Can the Teacher Improve His Skill in the Use of This Method? It goes without saying that he must be able to sense the capacity of his pupils for group participation and the extent to which their interest in it can be sustained. To do this the teacher must make himself thoroughly familiar with their interests and needs. He must suggest or help them to select topics which are really vital to them and which they are potentially able to cope with. He must familiarize himself with the problem, the issues, and the literature bearing thereupon. At the older levels he must help his group to explore their problem, to decide upon its subtopics, and to accept responsibility

for study and reports. He must practice the art of listening, questioning, directing (without dominating), and summarizing. He may attend discussion groups, conducted at various age levels, and study the technique of the leaders. He must be willing to be critical of himself and his procedure after every performance. He must remember that only by long and patient practice in actually leading discussions can he hope to perfect his skill.

What Contribution Can This Method Make to the Newer Emphasis in Education? Let us admit at once that when the discussion method is poorly administered, when the topic is forced upon a group which is not "ready" for it, when no preparation is made, when there is a minimum of group planning and participation, when the members do not take the matter seriously, when the period oozes out in aimless and uninformed chatter or in would-be witticisms, there is no contribution to creative learning.

But when a discussion is what it might be and sometimes is (be assured that it is a difficult method to use successfully!), then the results are educationally worth while. Then one has a right to expect: a clear recognition of a felt need or problem; a willingness to admit that one does not know enough to deal with it; a zeal to gather data and to recount experiences which will shed light upon it; an open-mindedness toward facts and a determination to play fairly with them; a sharing of experience and opinions; a serious desire to arrive at personal and group conclusions; and a determination to translate such conclusions into private and social conduct.

The Project Method. This method began as a

protest against that type of transmissive teaching which divorces learning from real life. Its advocates maintained that one learns to do by doing, and that learning therefore should be carried on in the midst of genuine activity. The earlier projects were of the farm-and-dairy type. It was maintained that the way to learn to raise cows is to raise them; that the way to learn how to run a farm is to run one—not to read about farms or to study theories about dairies in books and farm magazines. The advocates of the project method insisted that much of the material used in our educational system is over the heads of the pupils, or outside the range of their interests, or utterly unusable in its present form and in their on-going life. They said that our typical school instruction is book learning rather than life learning; that the setting for it is artificial, and that information is too often acquired for its own sake and not because it helps a pupil to meet his present problems.

It has been pointed out that four factors are always present in every teaching-learning situation. They are the child himself, the materials (primary and secondary) which are available, the society or community in which the pupil lives, and the teacher. It is affirmed that these four factors must be brought into a closer relationship in the teaching process, and that the real problem consists in relating the pupil to his society and community.

One of the earlier, and to me most helpful, definitions of the project is that given by Stevenson.³ He said, "A project is a problematic act carried to

³Stevenson, John A., "The Project Method of Teaching." The Macmillan Company, 1922. Used by permission.

completion in its natural setting." Four points are to be noted in this definition: (1) There must be action rather than passive acceptance of information. But action is not limited to physical activity. It may be intellectual, social, moral, or religious. (2) The project must contain a problem, the solution of which is not immediately apparent. It demands thinking, ingenuity, and experiment. (3) The setting must be natural, not artificial. Stevenson uses the illustration of an electric doorbell. One may study its principles in school and pore over diagrams which illustrate the proper placing of push button, wiring, batteries, and connections. But that is not a project. If, however, a pupil decides to install an electric bell in his home, purchases the parts, studies their construction and arrangement, puts them together, and installs the bell, then he is engaging in a project, because the setting is natural. (4) A project must be carried out to completion. It is not just an airing of the problem. One does not merely discuss electric bells with the physics teacher, or look at them in the electrician's window. He doesn't just think, "How fine it would be if we had an electric bell in the house!" He installs it and tests it to make certain that it works properly. A project then is not aimless activity or busyness. It is not just pottering about. It is doing something and getting it done.

Other writers have defined the project less rigidly than Stevenson. Stormzand⁴ calls it a "clearly purposeful task, and one that we can set before the pupil

⁴Stormzand, Martin J., "Progressive Methods of Teaching." Used by permission of and by arrangement with Houghton Mifflin Company, 1924.

as seeming to him vitally worth while, because it approximates a genuine activity such as men are engaged in in real life." Shaver⁵ defines it as "a single unified experience, utilized because of its social values, which can be entered into with a whole-hearted purpose, which is representative of real life situations, and which makes for control of new experiences as they are met." Kilpatrick⁶ calls it "a whole-hearted, purposeful activity, proceeding in a social environment." It is interesting to see how writers subsequent to Stevenson have expanded his conception, until almost anything may be called a project if it involves purposeful activity. This, it seems to me, is a mistake. There is no point in taking a definite idea and making it the dumping ground for whatever we should like to read into it. I prefer to confine the project method to that teaching technique which involves an activity, a problem, an actual situation, and a completed solution of the difficulties.

What Values Are Claimed for This Method, Particularly in the Field of Religious Education?

1. The project makes learning interesting, because actual life and real need are interesting. We may be impressed by the stories of famine and ignorance that come to us from the mission field, but when we discover people in our own community who are suffering from hunger and spiritual illiteracy we cannot rest until we have tried to relieve them.

⁵ Shaver, Erwin L., "The Project Principle in Religious Education." The University of Chicago Press, 1924.

⁶ Kilpatrick, William H., "Project Method." Teachers College, Columbia University, 1919.

2. The project compels thinking. A person has to decide what the actual situation involves. He must reflect upon any past knowledge or experience which might now prove useful. He rehearses a variety of possible solutions. He decides to try one. He finds that he needs more information or skill, and goes out to get both. He puts them to work and experiments with his solution. He does the thing that he thinks needs to be done. And after his work is finished, he surveys it and passes judgment upon it.

3. If a project is Christian in its purpose and spirit, it will help all those who engage in it to form habits of Christian conduct. We know that Christian habits are formed as one responds in a Christian way to actual situations. Habits thus formed are likely to carry over into other situations. That is the way that Christian character is built—not by studying its patterns merely, but by participating in acts of Christian usefulness and service.

What Illustrations of This Method May Be Cited from the Field of Christian Education? I shall describe three which have been reported by my students:

1. A Beginners and Primary project. There were forty children in these combined departments in the Church School of A——. They had no conception of the life of children in other countries. Two of the children were Japanese. The group wanted to know how the children and people of Japan live. It was decided to spend three Sundays on this project, with a concluding week-day party and exhibit. Stories were told about Japanese children—their toys, their games, their play experiences, their clothing, their

food, and their home life. Japanese toys were made and Japanese games were played. A Japanese village was constructed. Pictures illustrating Japanese life were used. Scrapbooks were made to be sent to children in Japan.

Invitations, written in Japanese characters, were sent to the parents to attend the final party. The children played Japanese games and the handwork of the project was exhibited. The attitudes of the group toward the two Japanese children and toward Japanese people in general were changed. The project provided for Christian thinking and sharing. It was carried through to completion, and the setting was a natural one because actual Japanese children were involved in it.

2. A Junior project. A class of boys in the Church School of B—— began to question the object to which their Sunday offerings were devoted. They found that the money was being used to purchase school supplies and to provide parties for themselves. They felt that their gifts should be used to help others less fortunate. They decided to use their offerings for some needy family. The family was selected and adopted. Supplies of food, clothing, and other gifts were purchased by the members of the class, at considerable sacrifice to them. They delivered the gifts to the family and became friends of the children. Their activity became contagious. Another class launched a similar project at Thanksgiving and the original class launched a second project at the Easter season. They learned what Jesus meant when he said, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me."

3. A Young People's project. In the city of C—, with 25,000 population, there was no gymnasium. A class in one of the churches appointed an athletic committee. They enjoyed hiking, but needed an indoor room for sports during the winter months. They tried to get persons in the town interested, without success. Then a young minister came to the church. He suggested that the parsonage—a ramshackle affair—should be rebuilt into a parish house. But the older men in the church “killed” the idea. Then the project was conceived.

The town was surveyed and the trouble spots—speak-easies, pool rooms, et cetera—were charted, and compared in number with wholesome places of amusement. An organization was established to work for the gymnasium. After two years the trustees of the church voted to turn the parsonage over to the town. Carpenters volunteered their services. Money for equipment was raised by socials and sales. Copies of the survey were printed and sold. Finally the building, with its gymnasium, was completed.

The results were listed as follows: The parents rejoiced in the boys' seriousness and persistence; the minister gained a strong hold upon the young people of the community; the town secured a gymnasium under Christian control; the Christian ministry gained five recruits from the group that engineered the project; and the “values in terms of character growth were innumerable.”

What Is the Teacher's Part? The teacher who would develop his skill in directing projects must understand the interests of his pupils. Only then can he suggest things that they are potentially able to

undertake. He must dissuade them from attempting a project that is beyond their powers. They might launch it with enthusiasm, but when it became too difficult or intricate for them, they would lose heart and quit.

The teacher must also know what his pupils need for their own development: experiences in coöperation, in doing things for others, in relating themselves to their community or to persons of other races and countries. They may need certain types of knowledge or of skill—such as knowledge of the spirit and life of Jesus or skill in handling the materials of worship. Many projects that are interesting to a group are not worth the time consumed in carrying them out. They do not give opportunity for practicing those Christian habits which pupils need to form.

The teacher must realize that projects require time and effort. They do not run themselves. They require much time outside of the regular class period. A teacher must be willing to give the time that a project requires and be sure that his pupils have free time to give.

The teacher must help his pupils to locate and initiate their project. He may have many possible plans in mind, and should guide his pupils to choose the best. He must know when to make suggestions and when to refrain from making them. He will do this so skillfully that when the plan is selected it will seem to the pupils to be their own. In fact, it will be their own, or rather it will be their plan and their teacher's, provided it has been coöperatively selected. The wise teacher will never superimpose his pet project upon his group.

The teacher should help his pupils to develop their own plans and procedures. A multitude of published projects are on the market. Some are suggested in the Graded Lessons. Others are issued in pamphlet or book form. Most of them are reports of actual experiences which have been worked out according to the principles described in this study. They are richly suggestive and furnish both materials and techniques which one may employ. But when a teacher adopts one of these project reports and attempts to repeat it step by step, he has missed the point of the method. He is defeating the project principle. He is simply using the old transmissive method in disguised form and baptizing it with a new name. Let me be very explicit on this point: A project must grow up out of the immediate situation in which pupils and teacher are living.

The teacher must remember that the exclusive use of the project method will limit the development of his pupils.⁷ It may deprive them of appreciations which they need to possess—for example, appreciations of the music and poetry of worship. It may deprive them of useful knowledge which they need to gain—such as knowledge of the Bible. It may cut them off from the opportunity to discuss problems which cannot at the time be carried to completion in a natural setting—for example, problems concerning the choice of a vocation, the nature and purpose

⁷ **Note.** If one defines a project as “any purposeful activity” in which a group may engage, then this statement does not hold true. For in that case almost any enterprise, from studying the life of Paul to the discussion of war and peace, might be called a project. I see no point, however, in making the term an omnibus word.

of God, the function of the Church, race relationships, international good will, and the abolition of war. It is difficult to discover or devise a graded series of projects which can provide for the well-balanced growth of one's pupils. Other methods can and should be used.

Finally, the teacher must be sure that the project is Christian in its emphasis and spirit. One must always ask: "Is this project developing in my pupils habits of thought, feeling, and conduct which are distinctly Christian? Does it promote their growth in kindness, generosity, understanding, love, sacrificial giving? Does the pupil see that in carrying out his project he is walking in Jesus' steps? Is the sharing of experience carried forward on the Christian basis? Does the project aid in understanding the purpose of the Christian enterprise, the Kingdom of God on earth? Does it lead the pupils to feel that they are coworkers with God, and does it help to establish a sense of dependence upon him and of fellowship with him?"

What Has This Method to Offer to the Newer Emphasis in Christian Education? Many persons feel that it is identical with the newer emphasis, that here is the new trail which the Christian teacher should follow. It is a fascinating method. It provides for a living and growing experience. It stimulates originality of thought and effort. It is a creative and constructive process. There is nothing abstract or dead in it, when it is correctly understood and pursued. It provides for the use of information and experience, but demands that both should be fruitful and meaningful. It comes more closely than

any other method to the experience of the disciples of Jesus who went forth with their Master into the villages of Galilee to minister to the sick, the sinful, and the discouraged, and to build up a coöperative society which was the beginning of the new social order. But the project will approach that experience of Jesus and his disciples only when its purpose and procedure are distinctly Christian.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL STUDY AND THOUGHT

1. Write out a description of your customary method of teaching. Does it resemble in any respect the old-fashioned recitation method?

2. If you have never tried to use the discussion method, begin to experiment with it. Follow the principles suggested in this study, and note the extent to which you secure pupil preparation and participation.

3. If you are in the habit of using the discussion method, check your technique against the criteria in this study. Wherein might you improve your skill?

4. Plan a discussion for your young people on the topic "How Much Freedom Do Young People Want?" or for your Juniors on "Should I Go to Sunday School When I Don't Feel Like It?" or for your Beginners on "Why Should I Share My Toys with My Playmates?"

5. How have you been in the habit of defining the project? Is it clear that your use of it depends upon your definition?

6. Do you agree that a Christian project should include an activity, a problem, a natural setting, a completed achievement, and that it should be Christian in its purpose and process?

7. Sketch a possible project for your group which would include these factors.

8. Help your pupils to launch some Christian project and guide them through to its completion. Then help them to evaluate what they have done.

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STUDY X

JESUS' METHODS AS A TEACHER

In previous studies frequent reference was made to the experience of Jesus as a teacher, and many quotations were cited from the Gospels. It is now my purpose to deal quite directly with Jesus' methods as a teacher.

It is probable that you have read the Gospels many times in order to discover the content of Jesus' teaching or to gain a more adequate understanding of the details of his life. Have you ever read them to see what light they shed upon a desirable teaching technique? Do you think of Jesus as teaching without methods or as having command of many methods? To what do you ascribe his success as a teacher? Here, for many of us, is an unexplored but very fertile field. In this study we shall try to sit at the feet of the Great Teacher and watch him as he teaches.

We shall want to ask certain questions? What were the aims of Jesus' teaching? Did Jesus make use of life situations? How did he use source materials? What specific methods did he employ? What was the secret of his influence as a teacher?

What Were the Aims of Jesus' Teaching? Jesus impressed his disciples as a leader who was pursuing definite aims.¹ He did not always proclaim them. Sometimes they must be inferred from the content and method of his work. But he never lost sight of them. They were consistently pursued. The Gospels

¹ **Note.** The scope of this study permits only the bare listing of Jesus' aims, and the reader is advised to consult the books listed in the bibliography; e.g., Terrot R. Glover's "Jesus of History," Chapters V and VI. Harper & Brothers, 1917.

make it clear that Jesus must have asked himself habitually the question, "Will this thing that I am doing or saying promote my aims?"

Jesus was always intent that men should have a vital experience of God. He lived in the presence of God. He saw God's purpose in the world of nature. He pictured God lovingly and appealingly. In a variety of ways he showed that God is with men, whether at a wedding feast when the wine gave out or with a group of discouraged fishermen spending a luckless night upon the lake. It was Jesus' purpose so to live that men would almost unconsciously associate God with whatever he did. Jesus himself mingled freely in the life of Palestine but wherever he went he seemed to be "bringing God with him." The people began to say: "God is here. God is like Jesus. Jesus is as God to us." To teach the way of God and to lead men to walk in that way was his primary aim.

Again, Jesus wanted men and women to know who they were. In his thought they were all the children of God, not grains of sand cast up on the shores of a second-rate planet. He was always trying to make them see the unsuspected possibilities in their own lives. He was forever drawing them up and on. There is in the words of Jesus a striking likeness to Hamlet's comment on human life: "What a piece of work is a man! . . . How infinite in faculty! . . . In action how like an angel! In apprehension how like a god!" But Jesus' words were always vibrant and sincere. In a series of parables (Luke, ch. 15) he said in substance: "I will tell you what you are worth to God. What the lost sheep was worth to the shepherd,

the lost coin to the woman who swept her house until she found it, the runaway prodigal to the father who waited for his return from the far country—that you are worth to God.”

Jesus also wanted men to treat one another as children of one Father. This simple statement lies at the basis of all that has been written in the field of Christian social ethics, racial relationships, and international understanding. He wanted a man to be able to say, not merely, “I am a child of God,” but also, “You, likewise, are a child of God. You are not just my pupil, my employee, my competitor, my partner. You are not a Negro or an Italian or a Jew; nor a foreigner nor the devotee of some strange religion or political doctrine or economic creed. You are a child of God and therefore my brother by divine right.”

Jesus' Use of Life Situations. Jesus' emphasis in teaching is what we call to-day experience-centered or life-situation-centered. This appears, first, in the choice of the little group by whom he surrounded himself. He chose the most fertile soil in which to sow the seed of his teaching. The disciples were teachable men; they were receptive; they were not sophisticated. They had received their training in the school of hard knocks. They were fishermen. They earned their living by the sweat of their brows. They were earnest, sensible, hard-headed but on the whole open-minded men. Jesus found it well-nigh impossible to make an impression upon those who had been taught in the formal schools of his day.

We notice, second, that Jesus knew what was in

the minds of these men. He must have gained this knowledge in part from his observation of human behavior. He knew the ways of men. He had watched them in their short cuts to success. He probably knew a man who was too lazy to dig a foundation for his house and, therefore, built it upon the shifting sand. He knew the meanness of men, the soddenness of their minds, the unloveliness of their natures. But he knew also their potential goodness and courage and strength. He had watched them in that school of life in Nazareth where, as in every town or city, ancient or modern, the pathos and the joy of life exist hand in hand. He "knew what was in man," and when he spoke there was no make-believe in his words.

He usually began his teaching with some bit of their own experience. The pedagogue would say that he used the "principle of apperception." He began where his hearers were, with some experience which they were observing or having; then, using the language of their world, he would lead them to see deeper and richer meanings in their experience. Sometimes he would seize upon some racial trait, as, for example, a buyer and a seller haggling over the price of a garment in a market-place bazaar. Without branding it as such, he was holding up a mirror in which his people could see themselves. Now it was another type of racial experience—the proverbial contempt of his fellow countrymen for the foreigner (Samaritan) who dwelt in the midst of the land. Now he would choose the experience of a sower, striding across the field like the central figure in Millet's canvas, scattering the seed on good ground, on stony ground,

and on the thorn-choked soil. Here was a group of children, sulking in the village square and refusing to play with one another; there a little group on a street corner telling idle tales about their neighbors or exchanging vulgar jokes about life. Jesus knew what men and women were thinking and saying and doing. These situations in which he found them became the warm and living materials with which he did his teaching work.

Of course, he was very skillful in his choice of situations. He utilized those which were common in his day. Just recall some of them: mixing yeast into bread dough, sewing patches on to old garments, spending a night in a fishing boat, salting fish, mending nets, caring for a sick child, journeying on foot along robber-infested paths, praying in the synagogue, giving alms, parading one's religion, judging dishonestly, tending hogs, shepherding sheep, tilling the fields and fighting weeds, watching the sky for signs of fair weather on the morrow. These were the ever-recurring experiences of his people. They were incorporated into the body of his teaching material.

As we come across these experiences in the Gospels, we are likely to get the impression that Jesus' teaching was quite without plan or method. Everything seems so casual and incidental. Many of his most significant utterances were occasional—i.e., they were suggested by occasions. One never gets the impression that Jesus took a group of people aside and said to them, "I am going to preach you a sermon on the Twenty-third Psalm"; or, "Our lesson to-day is on the story of Abraham as found in the twelfth chapter of Genesis." On the contrary, there is com-

plete freedom from all formality. There is utter spontaneity. Jesus seems to have taken advantage of whatever happened—a question by some eager companion, a case of need along the path, an objection from some disgruntled Pharisee, a fisherman mending his nets.

But let us beware of jumping at the easy conclusion that Jesus had no method; for what we have been describing was his method. And if his teaching seems to be altogether casual, it is probably because we have not perceived the clever artlessness of his art.

How Did Jesus Use Source Materials? By “source materials” I mean secondary source materials. When we use these words there rises before our minds a veritable array of Quarterlies, textbooks, Bible dictionaries, reference books, maps, atlases, et cetera. We think of the materials available in our private or public libraries. Of course, Jesus had no such body of printed information at his disposal.

He had become familiar with the Scriptures of the Old Testament and knew something of the interpretations of the same which the scribes had devised. He had learned such material in his parents’ home and in the synagogue school and worship. Every pious Jew taught his children the stories and poetry of the Old Testament. We may think of Joseph and Jesus together, poring over their “Sunday School lesson.” The body of instructional material in the synagogue consisted of the Law and the Prophets. The hymns were our Psalter. Jesus must have been familiar with the biographies, the history, the poetry, and the prophecy of his people, as well as with their traditions, customs, and prevailing religious practices.

While this body of information was not available

in printed form, his mind must have been stored with it. More than that, it had become interwoven into the very texture of his thinking and his life. He had "inwardly digested it." He knew it, not as a body of material unrelated to life, but as a part of the life of his people and of his own life. When he referred to it, therefore, in his teaching, he was so familiar with it, so at home in it, that he could draw freely upon his memory for it. It was not remote material which he had to "look up" in a book. It was his own material, which had been assimilated in his own intellectual and spiritual processes.

Let us look for a moment at his use of such material in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt., chs. 5 to 7). Jesus began by giving his hearers the foundation principles of his Kingdom—its *Magna Charta*, so to speak—and by describing the kind of life that would be demanded of its citizens. He proceeded almost at once to contrast his Kingdom with certain common Jewish conceptions. "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets," he said. "I came not to destroy, but to fulfil." Then he quoted from the Old Testament. He assumed that his hearers were familiar with it. He said, "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment." It is clear that in his teaching about murder, and in his subsequent teachings about adultery, revenge, love, almsgiving, and prayer, Jesus was not setting aside the Old Testament teachings. He was building upon them. He was assuming that his hearers knew

them and subscribed to them. But he went far beyond them, and pushed the range of their application into the realm of human interests and desires. He was dealing here with the characteristics of the men and women whom he knew so well, with the good and evil thoughts which they harbored in their imaginations. But in doing so he made most effective use of such Old Testament sayings and incidents as bore upon the problems with which he was dealing.

Observe, in the Sermon on the Mount and elsewhere in the Gospels, that Jesus did not indulge in long expositions or interpretations of Old Testament history or prophecy. Obviously it was not his purpose to transmit even the most superb passages of ancient writ. The scribes did that and Jesus did not follow their example. He moved through the materials of the Old Testament freely, selected what served his purpose, and used it to illuminate the situations and problems which he was discussing. He was a creative teacher.

What Specific Methods Did Jesus Employ? We find in Jesus' teachings illustrations of methods much advocated to-day.

1. He used *the question-and-answer method*. He took advantage of every question that was put to him. His enemies said to him on one occasion, "Why do ye eat and drink with the publicans and sinners?" Jesus replied: "They that are in health have no need of a physician; but they that are sick. I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." Observe that the asking of the question made their minds ready for his reply.

Often a question was put to him by one of his dis-

ciples or by some member of a friendly group. You recall that the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25 ff.) was given in answer to the question of a certain lawyer: "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" That question sharpened the attention of the lawyer and also of all those who heard him ask it. It made their minds ready for Jesus' story. Observe, also, that when the story was finished Jesus turned to the lawyer with a question: "Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers?" Jesus would not let the lawyer go until he had done some thinking. In this familiar incident, we have an excellent illustration of a familiar method.

Sometimes Jesus himself would ask a question which he believed his hearers wanted to ask but did not quite know how to phrase. He had an extraordinary ability to divine what was in men's minds, to fathom what it was that was troubling them. I think that is what happened on the road to Cæsarea Philippi (Matt. 16:13 ff.). Probably the disciples were wondering who he was with whom they had been associating for almost three years. He caught the question which was on their lips, turned it about, and put it to them: "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" They gave their answers—factual answers to a factual question. And then: "But who say ye that I am?" This was a different kind of question. It went beyond the facts to conviction and belief, and when they answered it they put themselves on record: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Sometimes, like the proverbial New England

Yankee, he would answer a question with a question. They came to him with a captious question, "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?" (Mark 12:13 ff.) Had he answered with a "Yes" or a "No," they would have had occasion to condemn him. He called for a coin, held it in his hand, and said, "Whose is this image and superscription?" They said, "Cæsar's." Then came the well-known answer, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." And they held their peace. Observe the very skillful manner in which Jesus used and fashioned this teaching situation. It might be truly said that Jesus never missed the opportunity which a question afforded him to deal frankly and truly with the situation in hand.

2. Jesus also used *the discussion method*. It seems natural for him to have used it, for he was always starting his teaching with immediate needs and problems. He encouraged his hearers to express their opinions and to think for themselves. He was always putting them up against problems and introducing them to situations which were a little too large for them. They had to think or sink. Of course, there can be no discussion unless there is a problem to discuss; but given a problem and eager minds, there will be discussion.

Sometimes the occasion for a discussion would be an incident which occurred along the path. They were walking through the grainfields on the Sabbath (Luke 6:1 ff.). His disciples plucked the ears of grain and ate them. The Pharisees started the discussion about the proper use of the Sabbath. Jesus made very clear and emphatic his position. It is to

be presumed that much more was said than is reported.

Sometimes the discussion was already in progress when Jesus came upon the scene. On one occasion the disciples were discussing the question of who should be greatest in the new Kingdom (Luke 22:24 ff.). The discussion had become bitter. They were quarreling. Jesus did not let the discussion end in a discussion, or in a quarrel, or just exhaust itself in idle words. He took the discussion into his own hands and expressed his conviction about the central issue in no uncertain terms: "The kings of the Gentiles have lordship over them. . . . But ye shall not be so: but he that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger. . . . I am in the midst of you as he that serveth."

When Jesus was present, a discussion was never a discussion just for its own sake. It was never a mere matching of wits against wits. It was a discussion designed to get at truth, to help the participants to penetrate to the heart of the problem.

3. Jesus made abundant use of *the story-telling method*. In fact it was his favorite method. He was an expert at it. No story-teller in human history was ever more in command of it.

He had a great fund of stories, or parables. Some of them were very short. None of them were long. All of them were to the point. He gathered the materials for his stories from the common experiences of every day. He made use of his hearers' everyday experiences, as I pointed out earlier in this study, and of their occupational interests. The central figures of his stories were shepherds, fishermen, farmers,

vinedressers, merchants, tax collectors, priests, teachers, home makers, cooks, tailors, carpenters, builders, travelers, et cetera. They represented the major occupations of Palestine. We see figures at work and at ease, watch them in their endless intercourse with one another, observe their actions and reactions in the face of the demands of human society and of the unyielding laws of their natural world. He made use also of the major crises in human life—births, weddings, deaths.

His stories are perfect pictures, little etchings of real life, snapshots, strips of film. They were not only faithful to life but they were perfect in their construction. There was always the familiar structure (Compare Study VIII)—the beginning, the body, the climax, and usually, though not always, the conclusion. Let me advise you to consult the stories of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Lost Son (Luke, ch. 15) or the parable of the Sower and other parables in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew. You have doubtless often read these chapters for their content. Read them now to observe their structure.

Let us examine, for example, the parable of the Lost Coin. A poor Jewish woman who had only ten pieces of silver in her purse (ten dimes, we might say) lost one piece. She was heartbroken. That piece was one tenth of her entire fortune. So she swept her house diligently, every crack and corner of it. It was a matter of great moment to her. At last when she found the coin she was so exultantly happy that she called in her neighbors to rejoice with her. "Rejoice with me," she cried, "for I have found the piece which I had lost." That is the central point of the

story—the vibrant joy of finding something precious that had been lost. All else in the story is focused on that point. And Jesus carried that idea over into his concluding comment, “There is joy in the presence of the angels of God,” when a lost soul is found. You will find that such was Jesus’ way in telling stories. He had a single concept which he wished to illustrate and he focused all the details of the story upon it. It is usually brought out strikingly in the climax.

4. Jesus used *the project method*. If you will refer to Study IX, in which this method was discussed, you will recall that the project method is marked by action or activity (broadly defined), that the activity is purposeful, that it is shared by those participating in it, that the setting in which the action occurs is natural or lifelike, and that it possesses a certain problematical character—that is, the solution is not instantly apparent or the issue immediately clear. When the project is completed, it calls for an evaluation of what has been attempted or achieved. This evaluation is a part of the project.

Let us examine two or three of the activities of Jesus with these points in mind. A great multitude had followed him to the mountain side to listen to his teaching (Matt. 14:13 ff.; John, ch. 6). As the day wore on, they became hungry and faint. Here was a problem. Should he send them away, as the disciples suggested, or should he feed them? If he tried to feed them, would the slight amount of food available be sufficient? Notice the activity in which the disciples and the people and the little boy with his luncheon (John 6:9) participated. They sat down in

companies upon the grass and began to eat. After the incident was over, the crowds followed him again, and he proceeded to evaluate the experience (vs. 26, 27, 35). He said, "Ye seek me . . . because ye ate of the loaves, and were filled. Work not for the food which perisheth. . . . I am the bread of life."

On another occasion (Luke 10:1 ff.) he sent out the Seventy in companies of two. He told them what they were to wear, where they were to go, how they were to travel, what they were to say. He warned them of the problems they were to meet. The issue of their journey was by no means clear. They set forth on their errand, and when they returned he reviewed it with them and helped them to pass judgment on the success and failure of it. Here, by our definition, is a fine example of the project method.

Indeed, Jesus' entire association with the disciples was a project. When he said to them, "Follow me," they had very little idea of what was implied. They did not know who he was; they could not tell what discipleship would involve. It was an enterprise and an adventure. But it was an enterprise in which they shared willingly and enthusiastically. And toward the close of it, he challenged them to pass judgment upon it: "Would ye also go away?"

5. Jesus made use of *the dramatic method*. By this statement I do not mean that he wrote or produced plays and pageants. I mean that he was conscious of the appeal of the dramatic, that he was aware of moments which were surcharged with dramatic tension, and that he combined words, acts, and movements of his body in a dramatic way.

Recall the incident in the Nazareth synagogue at

the beginning of his public ministry (Luke 4:16 ff.). He was handed the roll of the Law and the Prophets to read. He read deliberately, restored the roll to its attendant, and sat down, while all eyes were fixed upon him. He waited for a moment and then said, "To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears."

On another occasion he desired to talk to his disciples about humility (Mark 10:13 ff.). But he did not deal with this virtue abstractly, nor on this occasion did he use the story. He took a little child and led him into the midst. He gave the child the focus of attention. It was all quietly and deliberately done. Then when all eyes were fixed upon the child, he said that they all must become as little children.

Even the Lord's Supper, as the Catholic Church has well understood in the drama of the Mass, was acted out. They were seated about the passover feast. Judas had made his dramatic exit. Then "Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it; and . . . said [What would you have expected him to say? Note the pause and the breathless expectation!], . . . this is my body."

There seems to me no doubt that Jesus was well aware of the heightened effect that his words produced because of the dramatic manner in which he uttered them. They were intensely impressive; and hence were more deeply impressed upon the consciousness and memory of his auditors. In saying this, it is to be observed that there was nothing theatrical about Jesus; nor was there any hint of insincerity or "play acting," or masquerading for effect. Jesus had the true dramatic instinct. He had

something of great consequence to impart to his hearers. He used the methods which were calculated to be most effective.

What Was the Secret of Jesus' Influence as a Teacher? We must not conclude that Jesus' influence as a teacher was due wholly to the methodology which I have been describing. That his competence in the use of teaching techniques marks him as a great teacher I have no doubt. But they were not just clever devices which contain the secret of his power. They were tools which he used to serve his purpose. They would have been useless, just as his words would have been futile, if he had not been behind them. Back of the words, the gestures, the methods, was Jesus himself. The techniques were merely windows through which the light of his spirit could shine in upon a darkened world.

I have said that Jesus knew the truth about God and man. But his life was that truth. For once, faith and practice met in one personality and were joined together. Instinctively men knew that Jesus was what he taught. They felt the warmth and sincerity of his heart, the integrity and vitality of his intelligence, and the vigor of his purpose. He was what men hoped they might become. More than that, he was what men wished God to be. In him they saw the fulfillment of their dreams. Hence there flowed from his person an irresistible charm and power.

But we cannot account for the secret of this power apart from what the Christian Church has called his "person." His disciples realized early in their association with him that he was an extraordinary person.

They abandoned their vocations to follow him. As the months went by they had increasing evidence of his power over disease, his convincing authority in matters of moral conduct and religious belief, his freedom from all those sins which mar the lives of men, and his unique sense of complete fellowship and union with God. The question which they were pondering on the road to Cæsarea Philippi—"Who is he?"—they must often have asked one another. And on that journey, Peter, presumably speaking for all of them, revealed the conclusion to which they had come: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

After the resurrection they became sure that he who had tabernacled with them in the flesh was no ordinary person. They, and the members of the Early Church, called him divine. They prayed to him and baptized converts in his name. Their faith in him and their loyalty to him became the center of their living and the source of their power. "For to me to live," said Paul, "is Christ." Phil. 1:21. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death." Rom. 8:2.

It is possible that the disciples would have recognized Jesus' authority and power if he had said nothing or had said it in a very commonplace fashion. But he did not restrict himself to the living of an inarticulate life. By every art of thought and speech, of look and gesture, of bodily activity and intellectual acumen, he impinged himself upon the lives of his disciples. Of course, his words and his technique would have been inane without the person behind them. But his influence would have been much less effective if he had tried to communicate his ideas in a

mediocre or careless manner. In Jesus we find the rare combination of a great spirit and well-mastered methods.

Summary. Jesus, we have seen, had very definite aims—to bring men into fellowship with God and into fellowship with one another as God's children. In achieving these aims he employed and enriched the life situations of his hearers, and he made the most pertinent and vital use of the Scriptures and the experiences of his race. He was extraordinarily competent in the use of what we have called "modern methods of teaching." But the secret of his influence is to be found, not in his techniques, but in his own divine Person.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL STUDY AND THOUGHT

1. What were Jesus' aims as a teacher? Does the statement about them in this study coincide with your own aims?
2. Why did Jesus make use of life situations? If he had lived in your community what situations do you think he would have used?
3. How did Jesus' use of "source materials" differ from your use of the Bible, Quarterlies, textbooks, et cetera?
4. Was Jesus wise in using the teacher's method to accomplish his aim?
5. What evidence is there in the New Testament that Jesus was a successful teacher?
6. Read portions of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke to discover additional examples of Jesus' use of modern methods of teaching.
7. What do you believe was the secret of Jesus' ultimate success as a teacher?

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STUDY XI

GOD'S PART IN THE TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS

Thus far we may have seemed to be thinking of the human side of the teaching-learning process. Consider the topics which we have talked over together: contrasting emphases in teaching, the laws of learning, the employment of aims, the place of the pupil and the function of the teacher, the use of materials and specific methods. Over and over again, the words "process," "procedure," and "method" have been repeated. Does this mean that the process is a purely human device; that the modern teacher trusts to the working out of natural laws; that God is pushed out of the picture as if his aid were no longer required?

It must be admitted that the modern emphasis upon character in our Church Schools has tended to make our liberal religious education more and more like our progressive secular education. Speaking of a progressive Church School, a friend said to me recently, "So far as I can see, my son is being taught the same things in Church School that he is learning in a private day school."

There is a tendency to-day in some circles to identify religious education with character education. We are assured that their aims are similar and that their methods and materials are alike. We are told that the only kind of religion that should concern us is a religion of life, not of creed; a religion that issues in worthy character and that aims to create a more equitable social order. We may well be grateful for this newer emphasis that takes religion out of cloud-land and that seeks to make us "do justly, and to love kindness," to "visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction," and to keep ourselves "unspotted from the world."

But when we consider not only the aims of the newer religious education but also its methods—its emphasis upon the laws of learning and its man-made and man-operated tech-

niques—we may well wonder what has happened to God. Is this newer religious education man's attempt to "lift himself by his own boot straps"; to achieve moral character by his own efforts; to substitute an efficient methodology for the influence of the divine upon human motives and conduct?

I am putting the case somewhat extravagantly to challenge our attention. Do we know whither we are going? Do we really mean to do what we are doing? Or should we rethink once more our need of God and his indispensable place in our Church School program? This is the situation which I invite you to consider under the following topics: How does God work through laws and processes? How is God's will made known through ultimate aims? How is God's Spirit present and at work in life situations? Why is the presence of God's Spirit the dependable and indispensable factor in Christian education?

How Does God Work Through Laws and Processes? This question is the heart of our present problem; for if we conceive of God as existing wholly outside of his creation but not in it, then his purpose and his ways defy our understanding. If God is arbitrary and not dependable, if he ministers to our necessities through miracle but not through natural processes, then his ways are "past tracing out." To those who hold this view God cannot be found in the teaching-learning process. Indeed, no natural law or process can show even the "whisper of his ways."

But such is not the Christian concept of God. The God whom Christ reveals is consistently dependable. He "sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." His ways are "true, and righteous altogether." He does not ignore the processes which he has ordained or defy the laws which he expects us to obey. He uses both.

Moreover, God is consistently loving. He reveals

himself in purposes and acts which we know to be good. His help is always available and his "loving-kindness endureth for ever." He is sufficient for our deepest needs. Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that he meets us where those needs exist.

The God of our Christian faith is consistently near the world which he has brought into being and for whose perfection he is ceaselessly working. "My Father worketh even until now," said Jesus. We express this same faith in the familiar hymn, "This Is My Father's World." God is not an absentee creator and owner. He is working in and through the natural processes which we may reverently regard as the instruments of his will. So the Christian teacher, as he contemplates the beauty and majesty and order of the world, may truly say, "God is here, speaking to us and working on our behalf!"

The Christian teacher will do well to remember also that God has revealed himself through the lives of men who were specially in tune with him; for example, the prophets of the Old Testament and their spiritual descendants of every generation. To be sure, the prophets differed from one another in the manner of their life and their message. But God spoke to them and showed them his character and will. To Amos God seemed to be a God of justice; to Hosea, a God of love; to Isaiah, a God of majestic wisdom and purpose. Moreover, he came to them not in supernatural appearances, not in thunder or lightning or earthquake, but in the "still small voice" of their own hearts. These men knew their times by the same pathways of observation and insight by which all students of contemporary events know their times. By

means of the faculties with which they were endowed, quickened by faith and sharpened by use, they discerned God at work in the unfolding events of their world. God was not far away. He was near to man, working in and through the forces that were resident in nature and in human nature, and in the laws which he had written in men's hearts. "I will put my law in their inward parts," Jeremiah heard him say, "and in their heart will I write it." Jer. 31:33. Surely such a God will be in any process of religious education which is in harmony with his spirit.

Yet we do well to remember again that while the God whom Christ reveals is within his world, he is not confined within it nor identical with it nor hampered by it. God is above his world in the sense that he is complete while we are only "broken arcs" of a perfect circle. He is the embodiment of the dreams we never realize and of the plans we never attain. He is greater even than our dreams of him. It is reasonable to believe that he is the creator of them and not merely the object of them. That is why he has been called the Absolute.

Moreover, God must be far beyond our capacity to conceive or fathom him. Isaiah was right. There is "no searching of his understanding." He forever eludes our definitions and descriptions. In a manner of which we can only catch faint glimpses, he is trying to persuade us that there is another world that lies beyond our world of time and space, an unseen world of the spirit. Paul was thinking of that world when he exclaimed, "The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal," II Cor. 4:18.

Yet, as all spiritually sensitive souls have testified, God is forever trying to make us aware of these things that are eternal. They have believed that he speaks to men's hearts, leads them, guides them, changes their outlook and direction, and ushers them into a religious experience which is vibrant with joy, hope, and adventure. Such persons are, of course, living in the world of time. They eat, drink, work, grow weary, sleep, and work again and are subject to all the laws of growth and decay. Yet they have entered by faith into the world of unseen values, which is spiritually above the world of time and space.

But despite the use by such persons (for example, the mystics, the Friends, and others) of language that seems remote from our ordinary experience (for example, the "leading of the spirit," "illumination," and "union with God"), it is clear that God reveals himself through means which all of us recognize to a greater or less degree. God speaks to men through the experiences of others and the materials which they have written down in the Bible; through institutions which they have reared under divine inspiration and which they now direct; through the insights of conscience and the sensitivity of hearts that are willing to listen and to be guided. In other words, God speaks to men who are ready to hear and willing to respond to the stimulus of his challenge; and when they have so heard and responded, habits of listening and obedience are established just as all other habits are built up.

It is noteworthy that to those who describe their religious experience in mystical terms, God does not

declare himself by devices which are arbitrary or bizarre. There is no handwriting on the wall. He comes to us through those gateways of the soul by which we have always discovered beauty and majesty and order and life and love—the gateways of insight and of sensitivity by which men have always apprehended the inner Light.

In other words, whether God is conceived of as outside his world or within it, he deals with us and with all men through those avenues to our hearts and minds which we have been broadly defining in this book as the teaching-learning process. Perhaps all that I am saying here is implicit in the materials and methods of our modern religious education. I sincerely hope so. But at any rate, what may have been implicit I believe ought to be and can be made more explicit. Then, indeed, we may find that at the very heart of our teaching ministry God is at work—the God of authenticity and power.

How Is God's Will Made Known Through Ultimate Aims? In Study IV, where I was defining ultimate aims and describing the manner by which they are determined, I said that we cannot escape the conviction that our life has an eternal meaning and a final goal. We cannot fully comprehend that goal, but our thought of it is bound up with the nature and purpose of the God whom we have come to know in Jesus Christ.

It has been characteristic of religiously minded men that they have found the meaning of their lives and of their ultimate destiny in the character and will of God. Our primitive ancestors so believed. They found themselves living in a world of mystery.

They could not understand its laws or its forces. They planted their crops, and storms or drought destroyed them. They went forth to battle and unseen fates seemed to be fighting for or against them. They began to ask those questions which have always haunted the hearts of men: "Why am I here?" and "Whither am I going?" They found an answer which satisfied them only when they referred the mystery of their existence to the divine will and plan. They did not know what life meant, but they dared to believe that the higher powers knew. The riddle of life seemed insoluble until they related it to their divinities. That was the need of primitive man, and it has always remained man's elemental need.

In like manner, this was our own need when we first began to ask the questions of our childhood: "Who made me? Who is God? Why did he make me?" Like primitive man, the child finds himself in a world of wonder and of chaos. He tries to bring some kind of order out of that chaos. He wants to know the cause and meaning of what he sees. And he finds his satisfaction when he refers all things to God; when he can say, "God made the stars, the birds, the flowers; he made father and mother; he made me and everything." With a trustful faith that puts many of us to shame he accepts God and God's will as the center and goal of his existence.

Here is an approach to the problem of ultimate aims which we never outgrow the necessity of making. No matter how intelligent we become concerning the laws and processes of our natural world or our human civilization, we still find ourselves ignorant of life's deeper significance and unable to answer the

greatest of all questions, "Whence have we come and whither are we going?" We know that we are here in the midst of a world into which we were plunged without our knowledge or consent. We know that we are pushed and pulled by contrary forces—the conflicting urges of our own beings and the discordant appeals of our outside world. We see men striving for health and wealth, for family and professional success, for education and leisure, for fame and a good reputation, for self-advancement or for the service of others. We, too, are swept into the current of these normal human ambitions and strivings. But ever and again we find ourselves asking the questions of primitive men and of our own childhood: "Whence? Why? Whither?" And we are driven back, as men have always been driven, to some creative intelligence and will that alone can give us our ultimate answer—back through the mystery and majesty and silence of the natural world, back through the conflicting aims and purposes of our unstable civilization, to find some mighty Designer, who is trying to weave the stubborn strands of his creation into the pattern of his will. We are conscious of beauty and order and dependability in the world of nature, and of certain virtues and ideals—honor, truth, goodness, love, faith, sacrifice—that emerge in our human striving. We take all these qualities that appeal to us as best and grapple them together and idealize them and ascribe them in the totality of their perfection to One in whose life we dare to believe they completely exist. We call that One God, and we say that to do his will, though we can but dimly apprehend it, must always remain our

ultimate aim and the aim of any education that dares to call itself religious.

How Is God's Spirit Present and at Work in Life Situations? In Studies V and VI, which it might be well to re-read, life situations were described and illustrated. They were defined as the normal, recurring experiences of our daily lives. They always involve persons and usually persons in relationship to one another. They are not just products of our fanciful imaginations. They have actually happened or are in the midst of happening. For example, an empty church is not a life situation. It is only the setting for one. But if a weary man enters the sanctuary, and sits down quietly to think or kneels to pray; or if a group of people come slowly down the aisle for a wedding or a funeral or the sacrament of the Holy Communion, then we have a life situation, for living persons are present and activity (physical, mental, and emotional) is taking place.

I have already indicated in the studies just mentioned that some situations are much richer in content than others. They are more typical of what occurs in life, more representative of the experiences which we and others have, and more crucial in the sense that more depends upon how we meet them. But in addition to these points, some situations are more capable than others of spiritual enrichment; and these are likely to be more revealing of God's ways and purposes. This last sentence seems to be contrary to our faith that God is in every detail of his universe and that not a sparrow falls to the ground without him. But while it is true that God

is everywhere, still he is more vitally present whenever men are consciously trying to know and to do his will.

The life situations in which God seems peculiarly near us are many and varied. No one has made this clearer than Dr. Herbert Gray in his little book "Finding God," the materials for which were gathered through years of pastoral service and especially from letters written to him by men and women, young and old, and representing a wide variety of vocations, experience, and outlook. One thing is established "beyond all possible doubt," he writes. "The ways by which people attain to religious experience are very diverse and numerous."¹

Some of Dr. Gray's correspondents found God in beauty. One of them writes: "The spirit of God *forces* itself upon me—it is inescapable in beauty, and in music, and in poetry, but particularly in other people. . . . I am certain of his reality. He comes in all sorts of ways, but it's not just the consciousness of beauty and goodness, but of *some one*, and some one who demands absolute surrender."¹ Others found God in the experience of love—the love of children, parents, husbands, wives, and friends. Here is another testimony: "I don't think any other experience ever so finally and irresistibly taught me that God is here and is greater than our heart, as the experience of love which seemed too great for one's own heart to bear and which asked only to bless and fortify the ones loved."¹ How strangely like a New Testament phrase this is! "Every one that loveth is

¹ Gray, A. Herbert, "Finding God," pp. 13, 47, 97. Harper & Brothers, 1931.

begotten of God, and knoweth God . . . for God is love." I John 4:7, 8.

Still others found God in those life situations which challenge men to come to their relief or rescue. "The loudest and clearest thing God ever said to me was said in the slums of a great city, and took the form of an insistent call that I should find a way of doing something to remove that blot upon the dignity of man and that insult to God."² Again how like the call of the man of Macedonia, "Come over . . . and help us," Acts 16:9.

So Dr. Gray continues, mentioning life situations which ended in defeat or which were heavily marked with suffering; others in which groups of spiritually companionable people were brought together into the closest fellowship; and still others in which intellectually minded people grasped the meaning of God's presence through the processes of reflection and reasoned thought.

When one reflects upon such words and adds them to the testimonies that have come to him in his own religious work, he is led to believe that the situations of earth are "crammed with heaven," and that every common bush is "afire with God." And if discerning and sensitive hearts find God in the midst of life, then surely he must be there for all of us to find if we have spiritual insight. The trouble, however, is that we have looked for God in the mysterious and the extraordinary, just as we have sought for him outside of the laws and processes of his creation. That is why we have missed him even in those experiences where he was seeking to find us.

² Gray, A. Herbert, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

Among recent Catholic writers, Dr. Brown³ reminds us, no one has more strongly "insisted upon the naturalness of the religious life" than Baron von Hügel. "The supernatural, he reminds us, is never the abnormal; rather the natural raised to the highest degree of perfection of which it is capable. He would have us think of the supernatural life as accessible to anyone who will use the opportunities which are open to all for its cultivation and appropriation. He does not take his examples—though as a good Catholic he might have taken them—from the dramatic healings which faith attributes to our Lady of Lourdes and others of the saints, but from more homely instances which have come under his own observation of the victory of spirit over self-indulgence and fear. He tells us of a priest who is untroubled as he ministers to the dying on the battlefield; of a boy who dares social ostracism rather than be false to the truth; of a man, with all a man's natural instincts, who conquers physical passion at the behest of sacrificial love. In experiences like these, where familiar virtue is carried to heroic heights, one finds a richness, a romance, and an emancipation from all that is commonplace and monotonous which irresistibly suggests God."

Here then is testimony which we cannot dismiss; God is in the midst of life, working in and through our present experience and speaking to us out of the very situations in which we find ourselves placed. Sometimes he leads us into them; sometimes he gives us strength to endure them; sometimes he seeks to

³ Brown, William A., "God at Work," p. 59. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933.

save us from them when they are contrary to his will. But he is always there; and there we must look to find him. And there, more explicitly than we have yet done, we must point out to our pupils the trace of his footsteps and the whisper of his ways.

Why Is the Presence of God's Spirit the Dependable and Indispensable Factor in Christian Education? Because every other factor is subject to change. Recall the changes that have taken place in the curriculum, from the days when passages of Biblical material were memorized and recited to the present emphasis upon all sorts of everyday life situations. Note the shift in methods of teaching from the exposition of the Bible to the use of the project. Witness the attempts to define and to redefine aims in terms of a changing psychology or of the demands of a social and political order that is in a constant state of flux. Witness the alterations in our Church School plants and equipments from those of former years, which were designed for mass inspiration, to those of the present day, which provide for individual or small group instruction. Recall the ideal Church School teacher of yesterday—a person of warm and genuine religious piety and faith, but often lacking in knowledge of his subject and of teaching techniques; and the ideal teacher of to-day (compare Study VI) of whom we demand not only a vital religious experience but also a working knowledge of his pupils, his subject matter, and psychology and pedagogy as well. Observe that all these ideas change in type and style and come and go like shifting fashions. But in their midst one factor remains—the Spirit of the living God—the constant in the midst

of an endless round of variables. " 'Mid this dance of plastic circumstance," "Thy soul and God stand sure."

But God is also the indispensable factor in the teaching-learning process. Life is like a garden and the teacher at best is like a gardener. I have a small garden at my home and in it there is a modest bed of roses. In the spring I remove the mulch which I had heaped about the bushes, prune them almost savagely, fertilize the soil, spray the leaves, and watch out for the pests that would blast the buds. I know that my work as a gardener, even though I am an amateur, is necessary; that without my care the roses would cease to bloom or would revert to wild bushes. But I never deceive myself with the belief that I am growing roses. Only God can do that. Working through the soil and moisture and sun and rain and his laws of life and growth, God alone can make a rose.

As a Christian teacher I resemble the gardener. I try to protect my pupils, to prune away those ideas or habits which might prevent them from producing what they might accomplish; I try to expose them to the atmosphere which will promote their growth; I use all sorts of tools (my methods) and all sorts of nourishment (my materials) and I try to give my pupils a chance to grow by growing. But I know that all that I can do is just to help God to accomplish what he alone can do. Truly Paul may plant and Apollos may water, but God alone can give the increase.

I have just come from a meeting of the Friends on Easter morning. One of the speakers was reminding

us of the events of the last week of Jesus' earthly life. Jesus, he said, had set his face steadfastly toward Jerusalem. Throughout that week, from Palm Sunday to Gethsemane and Calvary, what held Jesus to his purpose was his faith in the wisdom and love of God. God's will was best and should be done. Easter was the seal of triumph that God put upon a life which carried on in such faith.

All of us, the speaker continued, have our little Gethsemanes and Calvaries to endure. If we meet them with courage we shall become persons of moral fiber and vigor. But if we can also meet them, as Jesus did, with faith in the plan and will of God whose purpose cannot fail, we, too, shall enter into the triumph of Easter, the experience of the sons of God.

We ought, of course, to help our pupils to meet all their life situations wisely, bravely, lovingly, and sacrificially. As teachers in Church Schools we are concerned with Christian character. But we must never forget the purpose which underlies character and which constitutes our power to achieve it. We ought also to remember that mere character—merely living a good life—is often a very dull business. A good many people, says Dr. Gray,⁴ who are “good, kind, practical people, . . . who face life bravely and endure without complaint, . . . who give largely and finely to others, . . . are missing what would crown their lives. . . . They suffer from one serious *malaise* which threatens all of us, . . . the *malaise* of finding that living ceases to interest them in any intense or vivid way.” I am sure that hundreds who never out-

⁴Gray, A. Herbert, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-25.

raged a propriety in their lives are very tired of the whole round. But some people escape their *malaise* by finding God. They stop expecting to find him apart from life and learn the real meaning of experiences they are in the midst of. "God is in this experience!" they say. They see "life as a God-filled thing. They may not change their outward ways very much. What is changed is their inward state. . . . They have awakened to the fact that God is with them in their lives, and they themselves are in his keeping."⁵

That is what the speaker at the Friends' meeting was saying. It is what I want this study to say. Easter triumph in the midst of life's commonplaces and Calvaries! In a world of flux and change, the dependable and indispensable God!

Summary. In this study I have taken the position that God is in his world as well as beyond it, and that he is working through the laws and forces which he has ordained; that the ultimate aim of our Christian teaching must always be to further the doing of God's will and the building of his Kingdom; that, while God is to be found in every life situation in which men participate, he is chiefly discernible in those situations which most adequately express his spirit; and that in a world of changing ideas and activities God alone remains dependable and is therefore indispensable in our teaching.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL STUDY AND THOUGHT

1. What place does God occupy in your teaching? Do you think of him as the subject of your teaching, or as actually helping you in your teaching?

2. Do you think of God as outside his universe or within its

⁵ Gray, A. Herbert, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-25.

laws and processes? Has this study helped you to reconcile these two ideas?

3. Write out somewhat fully your ultimate aim as a Christian teacher and show to what extent it is determined by your concept of God's purpose as revealed in Christ.

4. Make a list of the life situations in which you have been peculiarly aware of God's presence. Describe one of them in detail.

5. If a person believes that God is indispensable, what difference do you think it will make in his attitude toward his teaching work?

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STUDY XII

HOW MAY THE TEACHER DETERMINE THE RESULTS OF HIS TEACHING?

Let me admit at once that I cannot answer this question with accuracy. I have studied under many teachers. Some of them influenced my life profoundly. Others affected me not at all. One man helped to break down my faith in God. Another helped to build it up. I am sure that at certain periods in my life there was growth in my knowledge, insight, and the capacity for thought. My teachers had much to do with that growth. But I cannot, with any degree of exactness, affirm that I owe this change in my life solely to Teacher A or that change to Teacher B.

Perhaps you are surer than I am concerning your indebtedness to certain teachers. But can you trace the exact amount of change in your ability or your character to a particular teacher? Do you know how much growth occurred during a given period of your life; or to what degree it was due to your father, your mother, your home, your friends, your work, your play, your school, your private thoughts and dreams, your personal devotions, or to some experience of success that thrilled you or some disappointment that threatened to crush your spirit? Here was a complex environment over which you had little control and it acted upon you and stimulated you and you reacted to it. You, with your capacity for growth, and your environment, with its power to promote your development, together account for the changes that occurred. Your teacher was, perhaps, a very important factor in that environment. But is it not impossible to measure his contribution to your life?

Let us look for a moment at the matter from the other side. You and I are teachers. Some of us have taught just a few pupils; others have taught a great many. We hope that we have done something for them. But we cannot be certain just what we have done. There are, of course, many

things in life which we can measure with precision: for example, the growth in height and weight of a child; the rise and fall of his temperature when he is sick; his mastery of the vocabulary of a foreign tongue; his power to memorize mathematical tables, Bible verses, or a musical composition; his speed and skill in swimming, running, and baseball. But growth of a pupil in courage, courtesy, thoughtfulness, reverence for God, and loyalty to Christ we cannot determine with exactness. Still less can we compute the particular part of that growth for which we and our teaching are solely responsible. In short, the problem of this study is one which at present we cannot solve.

Nevertheless, we do want to know and we ought to try to find out whether we are helping to accomplish our aims. We ought not to be content to drift along. We ought to have more than a feeling that we are failing or succeeding. We have a right to seek some tangible evidence which will enable us to pass judgment upon our work. With a clear recognition, then, of our inability to determine the precise results of our teaching, I shall examine six different types of evidence that may shed some light upon our problem, evidence that comes from: an examination of the external factors in our teaching-learning situation; an examination of the school atmosphere, the pupil and staff morale, and the spirit of worship; the habit of self-criticism; the use of tests and measurements; the observation of pupil participation in class work and projects; and the evidence of Christian conduct in everyday life situations.

An Examination of the External Factors in Our Teaching-Learning Situation. Perchance you have thought of these external factors as desirable in themselves, but not as affording any basis for judging your teaching achievement. However, the absence of proper equipment and of an efficient organization makes good teaching extremely difficult; and their existence in a Church School, while not guaranteeing successful teaching, does promote it.

Let us, then, get at this topic by inspecting our

equipment with the aid of the following questions¹: Is there ample space for our class work or are our pupils crowded and cramped? Are there separate rooms for each class or group, or, if this is not possible, are the classes separated from each other by curtains or screens? Are there suitable rooms for worship and for social activities? Are cabinets provided for pupil and teacher supplies? Are the chairs comfortable and are tables provided for class work? Are the rooms adequately heated and ventilated? Are they clean, inviting, and in good repair? The external conditions here suggested affect our teaching for good or ill. It is amazing to see what teachers with ingenuity and resourcefulness can do to improve these details, even when their equipment is mediocre and their budgets are small.

In like manner, we may ask certain questions about our materials: Is each pupil provided with materials for study or work suited to his age and capacity? Are there adequate handwork supplies for the younger children? Are there Bibles and hymn books, containing hymns and tunes of good quality, for all pupils in the Junior Department and above? Is there a Church School library of resource materials for teacher and pupil use? We cannot hope to accomplish our aims unless these tools are available.

We may also ask questions concerning our organization: Is the curriculum of class work and projects so arranged that it provides for the fullest pupil par-

¹ **Note.** Many of the questions suggested in this study are taken from Standards A and B for the Sunday Church School, published by The International Council of Religious Education and used by permission.

icipation? Is the school graded, at least by departments, so that pupils of approximately the same age and ability are grouped together and are engaged in those types of study or activity for which they are fitted? Is there a systematic and dignified system of promotion from grade to grade or from department to department? Is there a plan for securing the regular attendance of enrolled pupils and for soliciting the membership of prospective pupils, and do the pupils themselves help to carry out the plan? Are the classes or groups organized with pupil officers who take responsibility for both in-school and out-of-school activities? Do the sessions of the school begin promptly? Are records kept of each pupil and do these records reveal pupil need and progress? Do parents regularly receive report cards which indicate their children's attendance, participation, needs, and growth? Observe that these are not matters of mere organization. They are an essential part of the total school environment to which our pupils are exposed.

Finally, we may ask the following questions about the service activities in which pupils engage: Are pupils made aware of community, or more distant, needs to which they can contribute money or personal service? Are they allowed to choose the causes to which they are to give or the activities in which they engage? Does the plan provide for the giving of money from the pupil's own earnings or allowance? Is the giving of money or personal service regular and continuous, rather than subject to spasmodic emotional appeals? Does the plan place responsibility on each pupil, and does it give expression to the most Christlike spirit of sharing and of sacrifice? Con-

sider the bearing of these questions on the principle that we learn to do by doing and to share by sharing. Note also that most of the questions asked in this section of the study apply equally to small and large Church Schools.

It should be said, of course, that the attainment of all these external conditions will not guarantee the results we desire. But it is clear, as thousands of teachers have testified, that the teaching-learning process is hindered when these conditions are bad and furthered when they are improved.

An Examination of the School Atmosphere, the Pupil and Staff Morale, and the Spirit of Worship. This type of evidence is more intangible than that which we have just been considering. The atmosphere of a Church School, like that of a home, is not so much seen as felt. One senses it, so to speak, with a sixth sense. Just as in a home one becomes aware of a spirit of happiness and comradeship between the members, a spirit which is more than the sum of what one sees and hears, so in a Church School one almost instinctively knows whether a spirit of coöperation and reverence is present or wanting. A visitor may not be quite able to account for this intuitive reaction to school atmosphere or to describe it in terms of what is actually said and done. But he knows it when it exists; and consciously or unconsciously he has probably asked such questions as the following:

Do the teachers and pupils go about their work as if they enjoyed it and took it seriously and found satisfaction in doing it together? Do they treat each other with cordiality and respect? Do the pupils ac-

cept responsibility willingly and eagerly and do they discharge the responsibility which they have assumed? Is the class work or discussion marked by a spirit of frankness, sincerity, and earnestness? Is it related to the everyday life of the pupils and of the community and does it stimulate them to express their convictions on matters in which they are interested or engaged? In the out-of-class activities, and the recreational and social programs, is there evidence of clean fun, good sportsmanship, and wholesome attitudes toward individuals and competing groups?

Are there signs of loyalty toward one another, toward the school and the Church, and indications that pupils and teachers are seeking to know God's will and to do it? Is there evidence of a serious and social attitude toward conditions in the community that ought to be improved? Are the pupils frankly facing the challenge and the opportunity of becoming members of the Church and sharers in the Christian enterprise? If you are teaching in a Church School where such questions can be truthfully answered in the affirmative, and if such affirmative answers can be made by you and your pupils, it seems likely that you are achieving, in some degree, your aim as a Christian teacher.

What I have said about the atmosphere of the Church School as a whole applies particularly to its worship. For worship exists distinctly to promote fellowship with God and to create in the lives of the worshipers a feeling of God's presence and power. Worship is an experience which is surcharged with the presence of the divine and which serious and reverent persons help to create. It is an experience

from which the worshiper should return to his workaday world refreshed and enkindled.

What of our Church School worship? What questions shall we ask about it? Is the place where worship is held conducive to a worshipful atmosphere? Is the room clean, in order, quiet, and so arranged that all eyes can be focused upon the leader, or upon the altar, or upon a table where the offering is to be placed? Is the room free from distracting sounds and sights and the coming and going of people? Is the period of worship set apart, so that no announcements or appeals or talks foreign to its spirit are allowed to interfere with the realization of God's presence? Does the leader come with a prepared spirit, so that the group feels sure that worship means something to him, and not that he is just conducting an exercise?

Is the service of worship intelligible to the members of the group? Are the materials used—the Scripture, the music and hymns, the prayers, the story, the talk—meaningful to the group by whom they are used? Do these materials give expression to a desire or a need of which the group is clearly conscious? Do they reflect a truly Christian idea of God and of personal character and social usefulness? Do the pupils participate in the service with sincerity, reverence, and whole-heartedness, so that the period is free from whispering, disorder, and inattention? Is there provision for training in worship—apart from the period of worship—when pupils are helped to understand the purpose and meaning of the experience, and when they learn to sing hymns and to participate in the responses and prayers intelligently and effectively?

Of course, it is possible for the pupils of a Church School to go through the formalities of a perfectly constructed and conducted service of worship without any vital effect upon their attitudes or conduct. They may even behave with seemingly decorum. In fact, many of the questions here asked about worship may be answered by you in the affirmative, and yet you may not be sure what the results really are in the lives of your pupils. But in so far as you are led to feel that they are participating in worship, seriously, reverently, and sincerely, you have a right to believe that their worship is helping them to achieve fellowship with God and a reverent attitude toward life.

The Habit of Self-Criticism. It does not follow that a person who is critical of himself and his performance will always succeed or be able to "stand at the head of the line." But, other things being equal, he is more likely to do so than his colleague who never passes a dispassionate judgment upon himself. The musician who plays a composition over and over until his playing more nearly satisfies himself is more likely to please his audience than if he had not been self-critical. The same holds true of the teacher.

I have already indicated certain qualities which are essential to good teaching in the section of Study VI on "How Can One Become a More Efficient Teacher?" The teacher who habitually "checks himself" against such qualities by means of a "self-rating scale" is likely to improve his teaching. But he would do well also to form the habit of asking himself periodically questions like these: Am I regular in my attendance and do I set my pupils the example

of punctually keeping my appointments with them? Do I go to my class prepared, and have I, therefore, a right to ask my pupils to be prepared? Am I able to discover the interests of my pupils and to deal with them so intelligently that their attention is sustained? Am I increasingly able to secure the co-operation of my pupils in accepting and preparing my assignments? Am I becoming so familiar with the life of my pupils that I can "speak their language"? Am I becoming more skillful in the use of teaching methods—the asking of questions, leading discussions, telling stories, guiding projects?

The teacher should also check himself to see whether he is increasingly willing to have his teaching supervised and criticized by others; to see the extent to which he allows his pupils to discuss controversial issues and to express opinions contrary to his own; to see the extent to which he keeps his mind open to new facts and points of view; to see whether he always deals patiently and fairly with difficult behavior problems whenever they arise.

The teacher should ask himself periodically whether he is growing in general culture and ability through his reading, study, and contacts with people; whether he is taking time for the cultivation of his personal devotional life; whether he is consciously providing those moral and spiritual stimuli in the environment of his pupils to which they may be expected to make an appropriate response.

These are guideposts to resultful teaching. They may not guarantee it. But if a teacher is growing in such habits as these, he may be sure that this is added evidence that his teaching is successful.

The Use of Tests and Measurements. It is altogether natural that we should desire more accurate estimates of our results than the foregoing types of evidence can furnish. This is why tests and measurements have been devised and used. The process of testing has been carried far in secular education. Elaborate devices have been constructed for measuring intelligence, and growth in knowledge and achievement. The old-fashioned examination, to test the accuracy and amount of one's factual knowledge, is as old as the Chinese. The use of such examinations by the Christian educator has not been common, but there is nothing detrimental about them. When they are well administered, with pupil coöperation, they may stimulate interest and better workmanship.

But while certain educators have insisted that whatever exists can be measured, it is nevertheless true that the results we seek in Christian education are intangible and elusive. Moral and religious attitudes and pupil growth in Christian appreciation, faith, and conduct cannot be measured by a yardstick. Tests² have been constructed to measure such qualities, but they are still in an experimental stage and should be used with caution. We may well hope that real progress may be made in their development.

Of course, we can compute with some accuracy the amount of knowledge which a pupil acquires through our teaching and the degree to which he can retain and use such knowledge. There are several types of such tests. The most common is the old-fashioned factual examination, consisting of a series of ques-

² Cf. bibliography at end of study.

tions, such as: What Bible characters are described in the book of Genesis? What are the names of Jesus' twelve disciples? This type of examination may also be used to test the pupil's judgment and insight. For example, why did Abraham leave the land of his fathers and go out, not knowing whither he went? If one is a disciple of Jesus to-day, what will one's attitude be toward war? Such an examination may also reveal the pupil's growth in knowledge and insight. An examination to test both qualities may be given at the beginning of a course of study. Then at the end a similar examination with different questions may be given and the results compared.

Another type is the so-called "completion" test in which omitted words are to be supplied by the pupils. For example, "But now abideth faith, _____, _____, these three; and the _____ of these is _____." This test reveals accuracy of memory only.

Another type is the so-called "true-false" test. Here a list of statements is furnished the pupil and he indicates by underscoring whether each statement is true or false. For example:

Saul was the first king of Israel.	TRUE	FALSE
David wrote all the Psalms.	TRUE	FALSE
Jesus was crucified by the Sea of Galilee.	TRUE	FALSE

Such tests are easier to score than the common type of examination. Sometimes they are used to test judgment or insight, but it is difficult to find statements of this sort which are either absolutely true or false. For example, Jesus should not have chosen Judas to be one of his disciples. This is not a question

to be marked "True" or "False." It is the theme for an essay in which both viewpoints may be presented.

Another type is the "multiple-choice" test. Here several alternative answers to a question are suggested and the pupil checks the answer which he believes to be correct. For example,

The first king of Israel was

- Abraham.
- Peter.
- Job.
- Saul.

When this type of test is used to measure insight or judgment as well as knowledge of facts it is often framed as follows³:

"The statements below are about people and various relations we might have with them. Some of the statements you will agree with very definitely, some of them you will disagree with quite positively, others you will feel some uncertainty about. Read each statement twice carefully. Think what it means, then put next the number of the statement a letter to show how you feel about the statements, as follows:

"T if you are very sure the statement is *true*.

"PT if you feel it is true in a large degree, or *probably true* as far as your experience goes.

"U if you are quite *uncertain*, or if you think it might sometimes be true and sometimes false.

"PF if you think it is false in a large degree, more false than true, is *probably false* as far as your experience goes.

"F if you are very sure the statement is *false*."

³ Quoted in part from "Attitudes Test on World Relations," prepared by E. J. Chave in coöperation with the Bureau of Research of The International Council of Religious Education. Used by permission.

Here will follow the statements which the pupil is to rate. They may be few in number or many. Such statements as the following may be used:

1. A Christian nation will never go to war.
2. A Christian, under all circumstances, should tell the truth.
3. Individuals are often unselfish in their motives and actions; groups never are.
4. A Christian will be so loyal to his religion that he cannot see any good in non-Christian religions.

It is easy to see that a test of this type is too complicated for use below the Junior level; and that the statements to be rated must be suited to the understanding of the group for which they are prepared. A test of this type requires thought, judgment, knowledge, and insight, if it is conscientiously answered. Of course, if it is treated flippantly, all that it reveals is an attitude of flippancy. Such tests have diagnostic and remedial value. They enable the teacher to understand the reactions of his pupils to a variety of problems and to decide what individual pupils need. Furthermore, if such tests are given once or twice a year, or at the beginning and end of a special course of study or project, they may reveal progress or growth.

Another type of test is the essay type, in which a pupil chooses one subject, out of a number suggested, for study and consideration. His written essay reveals his ability to analyze his problem, to examine materials that bear upon it, to organize them, to think out their implications, and to present his conclusions and convictions. Thus one might se-

lect as his theme, "Should a Christian Nation Ever Go to War?" It is an adolescent or adult theme. He might write an essay at the beginning of a course on the Christian attitude toward war and then another essay at the close of the course. A comparison of the two essays would indicate the pupil's growth. Of course, such essays are very difficult to grade or score.

We have seen, then, that we can test growth in knowledge of facts, in ability to draw inferences from such facts, in capacity of thought and reasoning. We may detect progress in moral and spiritual attitudes and convictions. But we must remember that such tests cannot reveal the entire knowledge or ability or point of view of a pupil. They are at the most a "random sampling" of his knowledge or capacity or attitudes.

We must be careful also to understand what we are testing. A knowledge test may reveal the extent and accuracy of a pupil's memory of Biblical facts. It may show us nothing about his moral or spiritual growth. Furthermore, we must beware of placing too much confidence in tests designed to measure growth or "shifts" in moral attitudes. Pupils may check the answers which they think they ought to make, or which Christian teaching would indicate they should make, or which at the moment they honestly want to make. Their answers may not show us how they will behave under the provocation of actual life situations.

Finally, the most reliable and valid tests devised do not reveal what portion of a pupil's progress in moral insight or spiritual appreciation is due to your

teaching and example—i.e., to you alone; for a pupil's growth is due to all the factors that are stimulating him in his total environment—home, playmates, friends, public school, radio, movies, newspapers, solitude, and that subtle process of physical, mental, and moral growing up which we call "maturation." Tests, in my judgment, are valuable if they are wisely used and if the results are wisely interpreted. But they furnish only one type of evidence of pupil growth.

The Observation of Pupil Participation in Class Work and Projects. In these two types of in-school activity you are likely to find evidence of a tangible nature, bearing upon our problem. I have already mentioned pupil participation in worship and in service activities. If a teacher is not too easily deceived, he can tell with some degree of certainty whether such participation is whole-hearted and genuine. But there are additional pieces of evidence for which to be on the lookout.

Does the pupil prepare the work assigned him and does he present his results to the class in a spirit of sharing? Does he give evidence of initiative in helping to plan and execute programs and projects? When he has promised to do his part, does he keep his promise?

Does the pupil reveal a growing respect for other members of his group—particularly of new members or members of other races or of other social strata in the community? Does he display a growing open-mindedness toward facts and toward opinions expressed by his associates?

Does the pupil show evidence of a growing con-

cern for conditions in the community or in the world which are detrimental or hostile to social welfare, economic justice, or political freedom? Does he give his money, time, energy, or study to the relief of such conditions in so far as he is able; and does he render such service as if it were a matter of his Christian duty and privilege, instead of regarding it as a nuisance and a bore?

Can you detect in your pupil an increasing interest in the more significant problems and enterprises with which you confront him? When he entered your class his interests may have been trivial and immature. Have those interests developed and changed so that now he is concerned about matters more worth while?

Does your pupil, at a suitable stage in his development, express a desire to "stand up and be counted" among the followers of Christ? Does he decide of his own accord to join the Church and to accept whole-heartedly the responsibilities of full church membership?

Any teacher who is concerned about results will ask such questions as these. If they can be answered in the affirmative, he may feel reasonably sure that some of his aims are being achieved. But, of course, he must be careful not to imagine that what he hopes to find exists or to idealize what he observes. It is easy for us teachers to be deceived by signs of a participation which is not very genuine. That is why objective tests and measurements are useful in correcting the subjective nature of our several observations.

The Evidence of Christian Conduct in Everyday Life Situations. Here is the crux of the whole matter, the evidence we are really seeking. We want to know what sort of persons we are helping to produce; not how much Biblical material they can quote, nor how many problems they have learned to discuss; not even what our tests and questions reveal with respect to their attitudes and feelings. We want to know how they behave in the face of the actual, unexpected, and often irritating experiences of their lives. Are they moral in their behavior—honest, clean, just, thoughtful, loving? Does their profession of religion carry over into life itself, and is it helping to produce persons of growing Christian character and social usefulness? These are the results we crave. How shall we find out whether they exist?

We must keep our eyes and ears open. We must observe our pupils' behavior outside of the classroom and the church atmosphere. We must watch them at play, and whenever they are "at ease." Do they seem to be approaching those character goals which are our aims? Of course, we shall need to be with them: to hike with them; to go on trips and to the movies with them; to take them on tours of inspection of community enterprises, such as factories, newspaper plants, settlements, missions, art galleries, and churches of other denominations. We shall watch them at work, if they have quit school, and talk with them about their jobs. In all these matters we shall listen and observe, to discover signs of growth in Christian character and conduct. But we shall observe as friends, not as spies.

We shall visit our pupils' homes and learn much from their parents. If they trust our motives, they may be willing to answer such questions as these: Is the pupil willing or unwilling to help his parents? Is he grateful or faultfinding? Is he considerate of his younger brothers and sisters or is he a bully? Does he do his work without being prodded? Is he careful about his health habits? Is he orderly about the house and in his room? Is he truthful about what he does and where he goes when he is away from his home? Does he reveal in his conversation a genuine interest in religious matters? Is he troubled by religious doubts? Does he pray and make use of any devotional helps in his private worship? Home visits which shed any light on these questions are an indispensable part of the teacher's work.

We shall compare our observations also with those of our pupil's public-school teachers. His public-school behavior represents his reaction to a different set of situations: to a teacher whom he may like or dislike; to the study of routine subjects or to the investigation of "secular" problems; to a different group of pupil associates; to the spirit of the school, with its enthusiasm for school athletics and (at the high school level) for parties and dances. We may find, when we and the pupil's public-school teachers compare notes, that our observations are confirmed, or supplemented, or that they must be set aside. But at any rate we become surer of whether growth in Christian conduct is, or is not, taking place.

We have been reminded that if we could observe a pupil's behavior over a period of time and in every conceivable situation, we should be able to state with

much exactness, "This pupil is such and such a person!" This is probably true, if we underscore the words "in every conceivable situation"; but there's the rub. We cannot observe pupils even in all the situations by which they are actually surrounded. We can only take samples or "make soundings" and then draw our conclusions. Of course we shall make mistakes. Behavior does not always reveal one's real character or motives. Perhaps, if we could watch the pupil long enough, we should see his real nature.

Finally, we must not look for immediate results. The Christian teacher must take a long-range view of his work. The learnings, both direct and incidental, that are taking place to-day may not really function for a long time to come. The teacher must be content to work and hope and wait. The years may show what tests and observations fail to disclose—that the pupil's life was being turned in the direction of Christian character and usefulness.

Conclusion. We have come to the end of this leadership training course. What has it meant to us? Each must answer for himself. But I should like to propound ten very personal questions. Your answers to them, if written out with careful and prayerful deliberation, may well become ten planks in your platform as a Christian teacher.

1. What do I think is meant by the new emphasis in Christian teaching?
2. What use can I make of my knowledge of the teaching-learning process?
3. What steps can I take to gain a more adequate knowledge of my pupils?
4. What can I do to enrich the quality of my personal religious experience?

5. How can I combine pupil situations and printed materials in a fruitful program of life-centered teaching?
6. How can I increase my skill in using the Bible so that its ideals will stimulate the Christian living of my pupils?
7. In what ways am I trying to relate my pupils to Christ, to God, and to the Church?
8. What lessons have I learned from the faith and methods of Jesus as a teacher?
9. In what sense do I now believe that I am a coworker with God and that he is working through me in my teaching?
10. Am I content to "go through the motions" of teaching, trusting that "something will happen," or am I concerned to test the quality of my work? If so, what tests do I propose to use?

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL STUDY AND THOUGHT

1. In what ways have you attempted to determine the results of your teaching?
2. Write out a brief but accurate description of your Church School organization, equipment, and service program. How do they aid or hinder your effectiveness as a teacher? How could they be improved?
3. Describe as exactly as you can the morale of your Church School and the spirit of its worship. Then examine your description with the aid of the questions suggested.
4. Are you willing to be critical of your teaching? What effect does criticism have upon you? Does it depress you or stimulate you? If it depresses you, do you think that you are a good sportsman?
5. Secure samples of standard tests (see "References"), select one suitable for your department, and use it. What do the results indicate? After some months, try another test. Compare results. Observe the cautions indicated in this study.
6. To what extent can you be sure of the growth of your pupils' participation in your in-school program?
7. How successful have you been in estimating the progress of your pupils' behavior in their out-of-school activities?

REFERENCES

Chave, Ernest J., "Supervision of Religious Education," Chapter XII. The University of Chicago Press, 1931. Standards A and B for the Sunday Church School. The International Council of Religious Education.

Vieth, Paul H., "Teaching for Christian Living," Chapter X. The Bethany Press, 1929.

Watson, Goodwin B., "Experimentation and Measurement in Religious Education," Chapters I to IV. Association Press, 1927. Contains lists of tests suitable for a variety of purposes, with description and name of publisher.

Note. Write for samples of tests to the Board of Education of your denomination, indicating the age of your pupils and the nature of the test desired.



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JUN 2 '38	Henri R. Pearsy Sp 1156 E. 57th
JUN 23 '38	Henri R. Pearsy D. L. T. 705 Ridge Avenue Evanston, Ill.
JUL 13 '38	
DEC 16 '38	J L Cheek
FEB 20 '39	7003 S. Sangamon
MAY 29 '39	L. Bagley
JUN 8 '39	Hates
JUL 6 '40	G. v. Reese
JUL 13 '40	6109 Greenwood on
JUL 13 '40	Daniel Baldwin
JUL 26 '40	Heard. 5825 Maryland
JUL 26 '40	Don Baldwin
JUL 31 '40	5825 Maryland
JUL 21 1947	Bertman
JUL 22 1947	Quater

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